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ABSTRACT

This case study concerns the school-community councils in Region One, one of the eight regions of the Detroit Public School System. School-community councils in this region were selected, in part, because they have been in the vanguard of the movement (approximately 18 years) to involve citizens in the decision-making processes at the local school level. The case study has been written for practitioners looking for help in improving the effectiveness of community councils and in identifying competencies essential to the role of a community council member. The authors believe the experiences of council members could serve as a model for community involvement in other sections of the United States. The case study is presented in two time sequences: 1960 to 1970, the years immediately preceding decentralization of the school system; and 1971 to 1978, the seven years following decentralization of the school system. Data were collected from published and unpublished research concerned with the region's school-community councils. Chapters describe the development of local school-community councils during the time periods and identify and analyze forces that influenced the development of these councils, their structure, and the way they function. (Author/MLP)

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COMMUNITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

A CASE STUDY OF REGION ONE, DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A MONOGRAPH, VOLUME II

Eleanor I. Barnwell
and
Burnis Hall, Jr.

EA 012 519

COMMUNITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

A CASE STUDY OF REGION ONE

DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A FINAL REPORT - VOLUME II

U.S.O.E.

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September 15, 1978 - September 14, 1979

A PROJECT OF THE

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION 1

A. Background and Purpose of the Study
B. Description of Research Procedures

CHAPTER II. 1960 TO 1970, THE YEARS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING DECENTRALIZATION OF THE DETROIT SCHOOL SYSTEM 5

A. How did the Region One local school-community councils develop during this period?

B. What were the patterns of organization?

C. What were the major activities of the councils?

D. What were the councils' perceived accomplishments?

E. What specific competencies were perceived by school staff and council members as being important to the role of a council member?

F. What forces impacted on the development, patterns of organization, activities and perceived accomplishments of the councils?

CHAPTER III. SCHOOL-COMMUNITY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT SINCE DECENTRALIZATION, 1971 TO 1978 . . 56

A. How did the Region One local school-community councils develop during this period?

B. What were the patterns of organization?

C. What were the major activities of the councils?

D. What were the councils' perceived accomplishments?

E. What specific competencies were perceived by school staff and council members as being important to the role of a council member?

F. What forces impacted on the development, patterns of organization, activities and perceived accomplishments of the councils?

APPENDIX A. COMPETENCIES FOR SCHOOL-COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBERS 164

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This Case Study of Community Council Development has been written for the practitioner who is looking for ways to improve upon the effectiveness of community councils and in identifying competencies essential to the role of a community council member.

This case study was concerned with the school-community councils in Region One, one of the eight regions which comprise the Detroit Public School System. School-Community Councils in Region One were selected, in part, because they have been in the "vanguard" of the movement to involve citizens in the decision-making processes at the local school level. The evolutionary development of community councils in Region One (i.e., approximately 18 years) has resulted in citizens acquiring a new set of competencies. That is, citizens have acquired specific skills, abilities and/or knowledge essential to the role of a community council member. The authors believe the experiences of council members in Region One could serve as a model for community involvement in other sections of the United States.

Description of the Research Procedures

Historical and case study methodology was used in this study. Historical methodology has been defined as "the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis

of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions concerning past events."[1] Matzner says a knowledge of history can serve two functions:

> (1) It may make possible avoiding a repetition of an inherent weakness in the practice.
> (2) It may be a source of clues as to what aspects or practices were instrumental in the lack of success of a basically sound plan. Both are necessary if innovative change is to become a successful part of educational practice.[2]

Historical research, like any other kind, is concerned with producing new knowledge, generating new insights and understandings of education, and revealing the way it has developed and operated.[3]

In a case study, an intensive investigation of a social unit is made. The researchers gather pertinent data about the present status, past experiences, and environmental forces that contribute to the individuality and behavior of the unit. A comprehensive, integrated picture of the social unit as it functions in society is constructed from an analysis of the sequences and inter-relationships.[4]

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[1]Walter R. Borg and Meredith D. Gall, Educational Research: An Introduction (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1963), p. 260.

[2]G. C. Matzner, "The Need for Historical and Legal Research in Education," in Methods and Techniques of Educational Research, ed. Ralph H. Jones, (Danville, Ill.: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1973), p. 156.

[3]John L. Hayman, Jr., Research in Education (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Pub. Co., 1968), p. 54.

[4]Deobold B. Van Dalen and William J. Meyer, Understanding Educational Research: An Introduction (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962), p. 218.

Although a case study more often evolves around a single case or individual, it may apply to a broader unit such as a total school or a large group of individuals,[5] or, as in this study, a group of councils.

According to Van Dalen, "Case studies probe in depth; they may examine the total life cycle of a social unit or may focus attention on a specific phase of it."[6] They are useful in identifying representative types and for serving as a source for valid generalizations about the population from which the case study is made.[7]

This case study will be presented in two time sequences: 1960 to 1970, the years immediately preceding decentralization of the Detroit school system; and 1971 to 1978, the seven years following decentralization of the school system.

Data was collected via published and unpublished research concerned with Region One's school-community councils. More specifically, the sources of this data were:

1. Reports made by region superintendents
2. Reports made by principals
3. Reports made by the regional school-community relations administrator
4. Minutes of region board meetings and regional committee meetings

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[5]Melvin E. Frazier, "Case Study Approach to Educational Research," in Methods and Techniques of Educational Research, ed. Ralph Jones, p. 127.

[6]Deobold B. Van Dalen and William J. Meyer, p. 218.

[7]Ibid., p. 218.

5. Community council meeting minutes

6. Monitoring reports of community council meetings by regional community liaison assistants

7. Council reports which appear in the region's annual convention program booklets

8. Reports from school-community agents and their supervisors

9. Central Board of Education minutes

Approximately 20 persons (i.e., an equal number of community council members and school staff) were interviewed for the purpose of identifying and assessing variables which influenced the development of Region One's councils, their structure and function, prior to and since 1971. These persons have been intimately involved in the actual organization of Region One's councils or have occupied other positions in the school system which have significantly influenced, or have been influenced by, their development.

The research procedures outlined above, provided answers to the six basic questions which guided this case study:

1. How did the Region One local school-community councils develop during this period?
2. What were the patterns of organizations?
3. What were the major activities of the councils?
4. What were the councils' perceived accomplishments?
5. What specific competencies were perceived by school staff and council members as being important to the role of a council member? (See Appendix A.)
6. What forces impacted on the development, patterns of organization, activities and perceived accomplishments of the councils?

CHAPTER II

1960 TO 1970, THE YEARS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING DECENTRALIZATION OF THE DETROIT SCHOOL SYSTEM

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the development of local school-community councils in Region One, Detroit Public Schools during the period, 1960 to 1970. A secondary purpose was to identify and analyze forces which influenced the development of these councils, their structure and the way they function. More specifically, this chapter will seek answers to the following questions;

1. How did the Region One local school-community councils develop during this period?
2. What were the patterns of organization?
3. What were the major activities of the councils?
4. What were the councils' perceived accomplishments?
5. What specific competencies were perceived by school staff and council members as being important to the role of a council member?

6. What forces impacted on the development, patterns of organization, activities and perceived accomplishments of the councils?

Methodology

Data reported were derived primarily from Central Board of Education records and ten interviews with selected school and community personnel. Each interview was transcribed and analyzed for content relating to the research questions. The resulting data helped guide the search of records and the organization of findings. Excerpts from the interviews are quoted throughout this report. All persons interviewed did not provide data related to every question.

The persons interveiwed and the letters used to identify their responses are as follows:

Persons Interviewed	Identification Letter
Former Region Superintendent	K
Present Region Superintendent	P
Former Central Deputy Superintendent for School-Community Relations	A
Former Director of the Great Cities School Improvement Project	M
School Community Agents	
Former Supervisor	D
Current Agent	L
Community Leaders	
Black Parent	C
White Parent	G
Principals	
Female	J
Male	O

Council Council Members	
Council Member	R
Council Member	S
Council Member	T
Council Member	U
Council Member	V
Council Member	W

1. How did the Region One Local School-Community Councils Develop during The 1960-1970 Period?

The idea of reforming schools by restructuring their governance has gone through cycles of decentralization since the first public schools were created in the 1830's.[1] The local school community council was a strategy which accommodated participation of parents and other concerned citizens in the governance of individual schools. A variety of conditions, issues, programs, organizations and people influenced the use of this strategy in the 1960's. The interviews produced information about how and why councils were organized.

> M. It seems to me that all public institutions historically are closed, just as I believe city government is closed today. There is no active interaction between the city and the people at a gut level. Outside of the formal complaints and hearings, there is no such participation that I am aware of. It seems to me that many urban school districts tried to operate in the same fashion a decade or two ago.
>
> The beginnings of change in Detroit came about with the development of the first Great Cities schools which numbered seven Schools[2] in the early sixties, and then mushroomed based on other funding sources. Those schools were committed to the "open school" concept similar to the model of Flint's lighted school.

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[1] Jack Faxon, "Background History of Detroit Public Schools Decentralization," November, 1976. (Mimeographed)

[2] Four of the seven schools are located in Region One.

There were, however, some differences. I think Flint's devotion to the lighted school were attempts to keep the schools open as miniature country clubs where all kinds of activities would be ongoing in the school far into the night for the use of the community. It seems to me that Detroit copied that and attempted in those early days to keep the schools open for community use and developed a counterpart to the school-community coordinator called school-community agent. But it seems to me that school-community agents took on a role far broader than simply to coordinate the activities in a school, particularly after school and in the evening. School-community agents, whether bureaucrats in education liked it or not, began to be advocates for the community and began to organize the community hopefully to solve problems, not only school problems that sometimes were painful, but also to organize the community to solve all kinds of local problems; blight, juvenile delinquency, crime, etc. They took on a much broader advocacy role.

A. During the sixties some people in school administration and some people in the community began to think about organizing school-community councils. . . . There were always community people who were alert and well informed about educational needs and educational problems, and who were always prepared to work with teachers and administrators. Often their desire to do this and indeed their push to do this, was misinterpreted and not altogether welcomed by some school people. Those of us in the division of school-community relations of the Detroit Public School System, and particularly that rather valiant and I think rather helpful group called school-community agents, helped give direction to how community residents, parents, teachers and administrators could come together to develop and organization that would fit their perceived needs. We envisioned an organization that would work to strengthen the ties of school and community, and contribute to a better educational environment for children.

J. During that period, in the Twelfth Street community, you had your very militant groups. School people were actually running from them and locking the schools to keep them out. At Hutchins Junior High School, Freeman Flynn, the principal, initiated an open door policy. That is how I saw the positive contribution of all groups. My school was in the same neighborhood and fed kids into Hutchins. At the same time I was aware of all of the disruption at Northern High School which was also in that community. So I suggested that we go to a wider base than a parent group. That was my first encounter with spreading the base of involvement with the community and seeing that base work.

I think councils may have been part of an involvement process that would have taken place in time anyway, as the role of the school had to change. Schools are in the most static roles you can find; education is very slow to change. . . . It is my opinion that we would not be as threatened by things we see now such as the tax revolt and fighting for survival of the schools if we had had more of a role for parents.

L. Why were agents writing guidelines for councils in 1967? Well, we weren't so sure even at that time that we were going to have a vehicle as legitimate as a region board, or as powerful. But all agents had seen the need for having councils. In 1966 there was a tremendous disruption at Jefferson and I had been a part of that, but even previous to that we had been involved in developing an advisory council out of Jefferson's night school program. Dee Potts had started a neighborhood committee at this school. In other schools, other things were happening at the same time. We could see the need coming.

K. I believe that the civil rights forces and other national movements were indications that the time had come for power to be disseminated and shared. Leadership that would facilitate community involvement was available not only within the region, but in national organizations, in city and state governments. Perhaps the climate had been set in the White House by people like Johnson and Kennedy which made the time right.

P. I don't believe anything happened in Region One prior to decentralization that wasn't hpaaening in the other regions that would influence the way we organized our councils. . . But I do know that Region One was perhaps the neediest region in terms of community involvement, because of the poor achievement of students and some other problems.

There was evidence that councils were organized in some Region One schools in the sixties. According to the 1968-69 evaluation of the school-community agent project, agents had been active in the establishment of citizen advisory committees in thirty schools. The fact that twenty-three of the forty-one agent placements were in Region One is proof that a significant number of the thirty councils were in Region One schools.[1]

O. When I came to this school in 1969, there was already an advisory committee in existence. In fact, there were three. There was a committee at Couzens, one at Jefferson and a combined Couzens-Jefferson Advisory Council. I continued with the practices.

I think most of this developed as a result of the 1967 riots, or even before, because there was publicity about school problems. . . People felt the schools were not as accessible as they should be. You had to schedule an appointment with the principal and then he wasn't always around. . . . There were also some civil rights concerns.

J. We started the council at Balch before decentralization. My first encounter with councils was when I was at the Crosman School in 1968. We were involved in a project with Wayne State University's school

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[1]John Curtin, "Evaluation of the School-Community Agent Project," Research and Development Department, Detroit Public Schools, April 1970, p. 2.

of social work. At that time, I was trying to develop a council base outside of the traditional school organization similar to one that had been developed at Hutchins Junior High School

Conflict can be a consequence of efforts to move into an existing solid, cohesive group by persons perceived as outsiders. Group struggles for power and resources can yeild the same results.[1] These premises were often substantiated during this era. Citizens who were perceived as outsiders endeavored to participate in matters which had been handled exclusively by the school system and encountered resistance.

D. In those days, citizens were beginning to feel their power. Opportunities came through our program to exercise some decision making in local schools. But that decision making was token. It was not in my view a real kind of decision making about real issues in schools like personnel issues, curricular issues, or selection of textbooks, the major functions of school. School people had not come to grips with community involvement and were absolutely astounded that people felt they had the right and wherewithal to make those decisions. So it forced conflict, as that seemed to be the only way in which the community could express what they were really trying to say, which in my view was simply they wanted the right to make decisions that affected their youngsters. When this didn't happen, the attacks came. They came as you well remember, in a variety of forms. First, negotiations were tried. Certainly in cases I was involved in, I know very well negotiations were tried. Where they failed, and

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[1]Harold J. Leavitt; William R. Dill; Henry B. Eyring, The Organizational World, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973), pp. 160-164.

where the problems remained unchanged, then conflict occurred.

J. At that time we did not get support from the regional office in our effort to organize a council because they said we were opening a can of worms, and that we could do it but we wouldn't get support. So we did it anyway.

L. While we were doing the model cities governing board thing, the school system even saw it as a danger and said, "Back off that. Don't get involved, because we really don't want citizens to get that involved." Nowadays we have come so far beyond what they were talking about!

School-community agents were often blamed for the conflict.

M. The advocacy that was developed in those early days continued to such an extent that for a few years school-community agents were regarded as rebels within the school district and were not particularly wanted in terms of their involvement on behalf of the community. Obviously our institution was no different from other institutions and resisted community involvement. . . and I certainly believe to thi day that the institution as a whole isn't particularly pleased with bona fide community involvement. Very few institutions believe in community involvement.

A. As you would expect, because the school-community agents were operating on this kind of cutting edge, they also were often suspect by school administrators and frequently performed their roles against the undertow of doubt, mistrust and even opposition engendered by establishment forces in the school organization.

D. Agents struggled to involve the community on a positive basis. A lot of people say to me now that they think the approach used by agents was an impossibility. I still think we were right in making agents responsible in some degree to the local

> schools. This assured interaction that I don't think we would have had otherwise, as conflictual as it was. I think people have to learn to live with that kind of conflict, because I don't view conflict as negative. Conflict is one way that change occurs, and it doesn't mean that it is bad. In every instance we tried to avoid conflict. Every move we made was to try to keep some order but to get change.

Some writers on the subject of conflict assert that "groups with clearly established standards and rules usually manage to fend off such interlopers,"[1] Cason reported:

> From memory, I recalled that in the majority of conflicts I had witnessed, between agencies and lower class citizen organizations, the citizens seldom won the decision. . ."[2]

The data for this study indicated this was not always the case in the early efforts to organize councils. An aftermath of the conflict was of times a change of principals. This researcher can recall at least six principals who were removed from Region One schools as a direct consequence of conflict engendered by citizen involvement.

D. In almost every one of the cases where conflict occurred, the person who suffered the most besides the kids was the principal. The principal was for the most part ousted from these locales and new principals brought in who could deal more professionally or may be psychologically with the people who were living in the community. Logic would tell you that a principal who wanted to survive would embrace some kind of organized citizen involvement, but that was not often the case. I remember in those days trying to convince principals that indeed, the route to take was to work with the local groups, not to work in conflict with them. There were principals who did not heed that advice and paid for it, while those who did, survived.

In summary, the local school-community councils developed in the sixties primarily through the efforts of school-community agents with encouragement from the Central Division of School-Community Relations. Contributing factors were 1) the citizens who had always wanted to work with the schools but had met resistance; 2) the 1967 civil disturbance or "riots;" 3) increased community concern about student achievement and related school problems; 4) the inacce-si-bility of schools to the community; and the 5) civil rights movement. These factors, combined with the availability of a professional school-community agent, made the council concept a timely strategy. Efforts to implement this strategy were, however, frequently met with resistance. One consequence of this conflict was usually the removal of principals whose schools were involved.

2. What Were The Patterns of Organization?

During this period, i.e., 1960-1970, "citizens advisory council" was the designation commonly given to the emerging school-community councils. Specific organizations were known by a variety of names, however, as the following excerpt from an agent's departmental report indicated:

> Citizen Advisory Committees are operative in many schools. . . . In the Miller Junior High Constellation, they are called Sub-Councils; at the Scripps, Marcy and Chaney Schools they are called School-Community Councils. McMichael calls it the Concerned Parents Group.[1]

The early councils had no common organizational patterns.

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[1]Division of School-Community Relations, Detroit Public Schools, "School-Community Agent Department Report," February 1970, p. 3. (Mimeographed)

They tendedd to include parents, non-parents, and community leaders in their memberships. Sometimes they were composed only of organizational representatives. For example, the P.T.A., Mothers' Club, block clubs and social agencies operating within the school's service boundaries would each be entitled to a designated number of voting members. Councils organized in this way functioned more as coordinating bodies for the variety of organizations attempting to relate to school concerns. Some councils were composed of parents and non-parents acting as individuals as was usually the case in the neighborhood committees and concerned citizens groups. There were also councils which functioned without officers:

> O. The early council at this school was composed primarily of representatives from a number of community groups, a format that still has carry over in the way the present council is structured.
>
> L. When I was assigned to Knudsen Junior High School, the Knudsen Neighborhood Committee was already functioning. I found that everybody signed the letters to the Board of Education, Dr. Drachler, etc. There was no chairman. They did not want a chairman. Everybody had to sign the letter. No one ever assumed they were speaking for all members. Every member of that group was an individual and you never said, "We all think that," because someone would say, "Wait a minute, you don't know whether we all think that." So each individual had to be asked each time, and in this case they were writing their letters and everybody was signing the letters. I walked in there brand new. They didn't like Dee Potts going and my replacing her. They didn't know me and the first thing I had to tell them was that they had to have a chairman. They absolutely had to have a chairman. . . .I said, "Look, we are into a

mess now, and it is going to get worse. You are going to be writing letters to the Board and you have to have one person wrtie for the whole group and sign the letters." Then they wanted to have three chairmen. And I said, "No. You have got to have just one." So then they wanted to rotate the chairmanship, and I said, "No, it has got to be consistent. You have got to select a leader out of this group." Well, they finally chose their leader. He was a good man.

D. I remember when we were debating how structured we ought to make those first councils because we had learned a hard lesson. We had invited community people to a meeting. We didn't want to structure it, but found we had done too much even then for the people because it sounded like we were trying to tell them what the structure ought to be for councils and they rejected our plan. They wanted to elect their own representatives to a planning group and then go through the planning process.

I think recognition of people's right to plan for themselves is a prerequisite for the success of the councils. That is, council members should not be handpicked by the administration of the schools. No matter how good the administration is. . . .

School-community agents pooled their experiences and developed guidelines which could be used as a model for organizing councils.

L. I know that October 10, 1967 was the date that agents met at Spain School to work out procedures to follow in organizing school community council, for instance, what would be the voting dates, the whole voting procedure? Knudsen follows those guidelines, now. We painstakingly raised every possibility we could think of and tried to develop policies that would meet all of those needs. If I had a copy of the region's guidelines handy, I could almost point word for word where that morning we discussed each item and came up with the policy. The policy

6. Sponsoring a Christmas bazaar.

7. Money raising projects to make possible student trips.

8. Banquets to recognize sports teams.

9. Parent orientation dinners.

That these activities were goal directed is illustrated by the following excerpts from the same report:

> A Parent-Faculty supper is sponsored by the Knudsen Neighborhood Committee as a vehicle for developing mutual trust. The suppers have been only partially successful because of poor attendance and some resentment of staff due to an old grievance. Some staff cannot forgive the committee for making statements about the poor conditions that existed at Knudsen about a year ago. What the faculty could not see was that the community people were offering their help to deal with a very difficult situation.[1]

> The Chaney School Agent reported that at one time, every room in the school had one or more windows broken. Flyers regarding the situation were sent home, but parents did not become involved in the problem. After some persistence in communication with parents, they suggested decorating each window of each room and making a sign across the entire front of the building. For example, during the Christmas season, "Seasons Greetings," and later on "Keep Chaney Beautiful."[2]

Examples of other council activities follow:

A. I can recall one in particular that pointed up to us in the central administration the problem we had to come to terms with as community people began to raise issues about the competence of their school

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[1] Ibid., p. 6.

[2] Ibid., p. 8.

principals and school administrators. I can recall specifically one principal. The parents came to a point of feeling that he was really out of touch with their children, with their needs, with their consciousness of community, with their group consciuosness, and in fact, I must say in my own view, I felt he was. This is not to say he had not been a conscientious principal. Indeed, I thought he was, and had served the school system well. He simply finally stood out for me as a stark example of the failure of some individual school administrators, who by virtue of their past experience, their past orientation, and the established ways they had of attacking school problems are no longer the persons ready and able to deal with the change process and to respond wholesomely and with committment to the needs of a predominately black school population.

While the parents were saying this to the school system, those of us in central administration did not really hear that as well as we should have been expected. That case is remembered as an example of how much work was required on the part of the parents of some school-communities to be heard regarding their needs and the problems of their schools as they were able to identify them.

I had some good experiences with parents of that community who came frequently to my office to talk about the appointment of other school administrators, and what we were beginning to reckon with, was the community's right to have some say about the ability and the adequacy of the individual being assigned to their school. . . to serve their needs. We had to come to terms with that. We were slow in doing it, but it took the organized community to really bring the school system in touch with those needs.

J. My council has been very supportive in bringing in new programs. For instance, when I started here with the Wayne project and whenever we were starting something different, we discussed it with the parents. They had a role in selecting staff among other roles.

O. I remember the advisory council met with the assistant superintendent downtown. They had some input into deciding who would be the new principal in two of our neighboring schools.

From the preceding it is apparent that council activities also included raising issues, identifying problems, supporting school programs and participating in staff selection.

Summary

Major activities of the councils during the sixties were 1) participating in program evaluation and planning, 2) supporting school programs, 3) planning experiences with the goal of facilitating the development of mutual trust and respect between school and community, 4) raising issues, 5) sponsoring money raising and socializing events, 6) evaluating staff effectiveness, 7) participating in staff selection, and 8) orientation and involvement of parents.

4. What Were the Council's Perceived Accomplishments?

The records and the interviewees implied that councils made progress in the sixties in resolving some of the problems that gave rise to their development. A few specific examples were given as follows:

J. The principal at Hutchins Junior High School had a council that involved a wide variety of parent and community groups in the Twelfth Street area, and was able to reverse the image of that school.

A. It took the "organized" community to really bring the school system in touch with community needs.

The agents reported:

> . . .initially, the community felt that it could not have meetings within the school or consult with the principal on observed problems. Presently, the community is informed about problems, consults with administration at any time, and an open-door policy is in existence. Community people feel comfortable in criticizing, questioning, and expressing concerns to administration. The Agent role has been primarily supportive to both sides.
>
> . . .an end to local school ignoring parent concerns did not come until parents took their problems to the region office and then to the School's Center Building. Previously, parent concerns were not acknowledged. Following the investigations by School Center officials, the local school administration now initiates conferences with parents regarding its plans and is careful to take time to get to know the leadership in the community. In the process, parents learned much more about procedures and channels, and the local building administration has learned that parents are reasonable.[1]
>
> The primary vehicles for cooperative involvement of staff and community at Knudsen Jr. High are the Knudsen Neighborhood Committee and Knudsen P.T.A. Both groups dealt very creditably with

[1] Ibid., p. 6.

two crucial personnel issues. Mr. Aubrey McCutcheon met with the groups to discuss the transfer without replacement of a much needed second assistant principal. The assistant was not replaced, but an additional department head was assigned. The second issue grew out of the loss of a teacher due to school reorganization. A committee from the Knudsen Neighborhood Committee met with the principal, assistant principal, and the agent and drafted a letter to the superintendent protesting the teacher's loss. The result was an extra teacher assigned to the school over and above the city-wide pupil-teacher ration. The Knudsen Neighborhood Committee also worked with the staff in a valiant attempt to keep the Urban Area employment aides in the school. However, conditions were beyond their control to save the project.

Summary

The date indicated that councils of the sixties experienced some accomplishments. 1) They provided a structure in which diverse community groups worked together on educational problems. 2) The image of the schools as "closed" inaccessible institutions began changing. 3) The community learned about and tested procedures and channels for making changes in the school system. 4) Staffing patterns in schools were influenced. 5) Councils gained a reputation as a workable school-community communication strategy.

5. What Specific Competencies Were Perceived by School Staff and Council Members as Being Important to the Role of a Council Member?

In a study of significant differences of social class which exist between citizen organizations in their approach to decision making and perceptions of social power, Cason found "the single most important factor of social power is competence, which enables all forms of organizations to acquire needed resources."[1] There are indications of competencies which appeared to be particularly important to the role of members in the early council organizational efforts.

Council members needed to know how to identify and use community leadership.

> D. The identification of opinion leaders was one of the goals that we set for ourselves. We would identify in the community the people to whom other people went, no matter what role they played. It didn't have to be an elected role. Using that concept of leadership, we began to tie in for our own program development those people, who attracted other people. Agents ended up knowing a good deal about community leadership and ways to influence a community.
>
> No matter how good the administration is, it should not handpick the council. People like us in professional roles have no right to select leaders. People should select their own leaders.

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[1] Cason, p. 9.

There is evidence that the community knew how to select leaders:

> L. They did not want a chairman . . . Then they wanted to have three chairmen. And I said, "No. . .you have got to have just one." . . .Well, they finally chose their leader. He was a good man. In fact, he's gone up in the union now. He was a firey guy, bright and resourceful. But at that point, he was a maintenance man at a Chrysler plant.

Citizens needed to know how to work with the school bureaucracy in order to get action.

> D. Citizens developed a lot of skill in dealing with the bureaucracy in programs like ours and in the poverty program. I can remember them pinning Mayor Cavanagh right to the wall one night in a meeting and he promised them everything, stuff he couldn't deliver. But citizens were a lot stronger than he reckoned with in terms of their ability to make some changes.

This kind of skill was important and is further illustrated by a report from an agent who has been cited previously in history. The agent described a process parents followed to put an end to the ignoring of parent concerns by a local school. The report concluded, "In the process, parents learned much more about procedures and channels."[1]

Following is a related comment from one of the parents interviewed:

> C. Before the councils came along, you didn't understand what lines of authority to follow.

How to function as a group was another important skill.

> L. In the Jefferson area, no one made a decision unless there was a group. No individual ever made a decision. No matter what had to be decided you had to have a group to meet to-

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[1] School-Community Agent Department Report," February 1970, p. 14.

gether in a meeting to decide. Now, in the Knudsen area, it was the exact opposite. Every member of that group was an individual. . . each individual had to be asked each time.

Planning skills were necessary.

D. They wanted to elect their own representatives to a planning group and then go through the planning process. I have used that principle a lot after that both in my own organizing and in what I am trying to teach.

A report of a 1969 training workshop at one school which had a council indicated that participants were helped to develop competencies relating to communicating with each other and with the staff. They also learned to write goals and objectives.

> A four-day planning and training workshop was held at the end of the summer session. It was attended by the Balch staff, an equal number community people and students. . . . Various strategies were used to develop and encourage openness and sharing. . . . The groups talked about themselves as individuals, as group members, and as community or school people. . . . Finally, small groups met and developed goals and objectives for the coming year. The teaching staff had developed much openness with the community and students and the community was more open and willing to share its concerns and needs. . . . Additional sessions are being planned during the coming school year for community and students.[1]

Activities of the early councils reported earlier in this chapter included program and staff evaluation, supporting school programs, raising issues, sponsoring money raising and social events, participating in staff selection, and orientation and involvement of parents. It can be concluded that competencies related to these activities were important to the roles of members.

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[1] Ibid.

In summary, the competencies which were important to the roles of council members in the sixties included the ability to identify and use community leadership, skills in getting action from a bureaucracy, functioning as a group, and planning. In addition, council members needed to know how to evaluate programs and staff, support school programs, raise issues, raise money, sponsor social events, participate in staff election, and involve and provide orientation for parents.

6. What Forces Impacted on the Development Patterns of Organization, Activities and Perceived Accomplishments of the Councils?

A secondary purpose of this research is to identify and analyze forces which influenced the development of the councils, their structure and the way they functioned. This section contains the report of findings relating to those forces in operation during the years 1960 to 1970.

Citizens Advisory Committees, Commissions and Task Forces

Laying the groundwork for much of the school system's activities related to councils in the 1960's was the 1958 report of the Citizens Advisory Committee on School Needs. This was a city-wide group appointed by the superintendent in 1957. Included in its membership was representation from business, government and community people. The com-

mittee had been asked by the superintendent to make recommendations to the Board of Education based on a study of the school needs of the community. In its report, the committee advocated increased community involvement in schools and recommended that every shcool have a parent-teacher organization.[1]

Additional impetus was provided through the work of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities (CACEEO), appointed in 1960 by the Board of Education. CACEEO was asked to "recommend ways in which the schools could be improved to provide more nearly equal educational opportunities for all pupils."[1]

The following CACEEO recommendation pertaining to local school community organizations was approved by the Board of Education in 1962:

> The Board of Education should survey the schools to determine where there are no active parent organizations at present, and encourage or take appropriate measures to see that such organizations are formed.[2]

A significant innovation of the sixties was the use of project advisory committees. These committees were appointed by the superintendent to discuss and approve plans for new

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[1]Citizens Advisory Committee on School Needs, "Findings and Recommendations of the City-Wide Committee," Detroit Public Schools, November, 1958, p. ii.

[1]The Board of Education of the City of Detroit, "Board Action and Staff Commentaries on the Recommendations Submitted in March 1962 by the Citizens Advisory Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities," June, 1962, p. iii.

[2]Ibid., p. sc-9

buildings, additions to buildings or rehabilitation of buildings.[1] Residents of the neighborhoods composed the majority membership and each school involved in these processes had its own committee. In Region One, committees waged fierce battles to assure equal facilities in their neighborhoods which intensified community interest in the schools. Experiences with the project advisory committees also induced citizens to question the School Board's practice of "appointing" neighborhood representatives. Citizens maintained the community should have the right to name its own representatives.

The High School Study Commission appointed by the Board of Education in 1966 was another force which encouraged the local council effort. This commission was established in response to a walkout and boycott by Northern High School students.[2] Northern was one of three high schools which would eventually be placed under the jurisdiction of the Region One Board of Education. Students took this action to protest the kind of education they were receiving and as a way of demanding a change in the administration of the school.

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[1] Citizens Advisory Committee on School Needs, pp. 194-197.

[2] Board of Education of the City of Detroit, "Report of the Detroit High School Study Commission," June 1968, p. 3.

One of the commission's recommendations approved by the Board of Education read as follows:

> There should be established at each school a Citizen's Advisory Committee for the purpose of helping the school modify its structure, offerings, rules, etc., in order to more effectively reach its goals. It is assumed that citizens would participate in the decision-making process at the local building level.[1]

The Division of School-Community Relations

By the mid-sixties, the Division of School Relationship and Special Services had become the Division of School-Community Relations. Its former director was the Superintendent of Schools. During the 1960's, the division was headed by a deputy superintendent who had formerly served as Executive Secretary for Detroit's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and as Deputy Deirctor of Michigan's Fair Employment Practices Commission. It was reasonable to conclude that the highest levels in the school system included leadership which was both sensitive to and experienced in school-community relations.

School-community agents were staff members in this division. Field coordinators were added to the agent staff and the agents encouraged and assisted communities in organizing councils.

The person who was then deputy superintendent for school-community relations was a contributor to this study

[1]Board of Education of the City of Detroit, "Report of the Detroit High School Study Commission," June 1968, p. 3.

and among his recollections were the following:

A. I felt very strongly that we had to develop legitimate means by which parents could in fact participate in the decision making process and do so on an orderly basis, realizing that they could not in fact directly govern the schools, and they could not in fact actually run the schools. Those who were responsible for governing and running the schools had to know what the parents and community would sanction and what was to be their relationship to the way in which the schools were to grow and serve the community.

I thought it was important for us to take the first step in inviting the community to participate in the evaluation of the person to be appointed as school-community agent. The agents were in the school-community relations division and represented the best we could offer in the way of a new kind of school professional: one who was able to relate without any fear or without feeling threatened, to parents and school-community organizations; one who was responsive and who knew when to listen and how to communicate. I arranged a meeting with a group of school-community residents to discuss the appointment.

The Great Cities School Improvement Project

Following the issuance of the report of the Citizens Advisory Committee on School Needs, the Great Cities School Improvement Project with its school-community agent program, was instituted by the Board of Education. This project also included adult education programs, and schools in the project were made available for meetings of local organizations. The Great Cities Project had an impact on the council movement, particularly in the area of leadership development.

D. The Great Cities School Improvement Project deserves a lot of credit for citizen leadership development within the inner city. All of the activities, adult education classes and trips were valuable. In those days we also had about 200 school-community assistants on the

payroll. That in and of itself was a leadership development tool.

C. One thing that started a long time ago before decentralization was the Great Cities project. All of those classes in all kinds of things, the trips and the summer programs for our children provided us with training through experience. We were exposed to a lot of things.

School-Community Agents

A role description for school-community agents which had been initiated in 1965, was formally approved by the Board of Education in 1969. In that document, the school-community agent was described as:

> . . . The professional worker who is trained to stimulate and guide the community development process, assisting the school as an institution, and individuals and groups of the community in the strengthening of attitudes, concepts, and skills required for maximum democratic participation in an effective solution of school-community problems.

School records and interveiwees in this study indicated that agents were in the vanguard of the council movement in Region One.

M. School-community agents, whether bureaucrats in education liked it or not, began to be advocates for the community. The agent began to organize the community, hopefully to solve problems, not only school problems that sometimes were painful, but general community problems also. . .I think staff people like you who have had broad experience in organizing community groups and delivering them in effect to the schools had an impact. It seemed to me that school-community agents and community coordinaotrs helped develop that kind of impact on the schools in Region One.

A. The school people who were most active in organizing councils were the school-community agents. Because they were, in a sense, change agents, it was altoghter

reasonable that they should be the most diligent in giving attention to the need to develop this kind of school related organization.

Agents were encouraged, and indeed, directed by their supervisor to cultivate community leadership.

D. In the early days of the Great Cities Project when the agents were few, we conducted a study which showed after four years, we were spending about 85% of our time in adult education activity. At that time, we agreed as a group, and we got support from above, to move out of adult education and move into school-community contact which we felt was more our role. . . . Once agents were freed from school oriented tasks, they had the opportunity to really get to know people in the community. They began to do leadership training, assisting with the development of block clubs, working more in the political arena in terms of helping develop voter registration drives and at the same time trying to bring all these efforts into focus with education.

I think what we were doing was building a base for the community councils that later emerged. The school-community agent program was instrumental in the development of leadership and later in the development of the council structure and the whole decentralized system.

A factor which changed the emphasis of the agent role was the source of funding. The Economic Act of 1964 which emphasized community action made possible an expansion in the number of agents from ten in 1961-62 to thirty in 1964-65. In a report of influences of the Economic Opportunity Act, the DeRamus said:

> And the school-community agent? He was learning the real meaning of strengthening the ties between the school and the community-leg work. He attended meetings; made home visits; took tea with block clubs; dropped in on police precincts; searched everywhere for ways to help the community develop its skills for problem solving.[1]

By 1968-69 there were shcool-community councils in thirty agent serviced schools. At that time, there were forty-one agents, twenty-three of whom were assigned to Region One schools. In 1967, the agents developed written guidelines for organizing councils which emanated from their first-hand experiences. These guidelines were used in ensuing months by schools in which councils were organized.

School-Community Agent departmental reports contained many examples of citizen leadership training activities conducted and supported by agents. These reports also indicated that agents' offices provided much of the clerical and other resourch functions which enabled citizens' groups to function effectively.[2]

Socio-Economic Conditions

Region One is located in Detroit's inner city, and residents have had to contend with a superfluity of socio-

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[1]Betty DeRamus, "The Constant Search: The Story of Federal Aid to Detroit Schools." Detroit: Detroit Board of Education, 1968, p. 14.

[2]See for example, "School-Community Agent Project Status Report," November 1969, and "School-Community Agent Department Report," February 1969.

economic problems. It was not surprising that the movement toward the developemtn of councils to resolve school issues was often interrelated with attacks on other socio-economic problems. Socio-economic conditions and typical responses to them were described by some of the persons interviewed:

A. Critical socio-economic factors were present in Region One which provided a critical test of a community's ability to reform its schools. You had concentrated poverty which was a normal condition. There was also a high level of family disorganization which tends to be associated with poverty conditions, poor housing, high unemployment and a significantly high crime rate. All of these conditions could not or should not obscrue the human struggle that the parents, children, teachers and administrators had to make. Hence, it was in that region that I felt the most important challenge confronted the school system as a whole.

L. All I have are notions about the differences between Region One and other regions in the city. I think historically, white middle class communities, whether in Detroit or elsewhere, had knowledge about schools. This was a broad, almost inherent knowledge which was part of the culture. These communities knew at any given time how to organize and correct problems at local schools. So really, I do not believe that in affluent areas historically, there is really a great volume of participation occurring in the schools. If the school is performing properly, that community is not going to organize itself, except in an emergency just as a suburb organizes overnight on behalf of better garbage collection, and is very effective. Poor people, black or white, have no historic interaction with the schools, nor do they have any historic interaction with any other institution except out of fear and mistrust and sometimes hostility. So I think the difference is that the poor have to be more broadly representative in the affairs of the schools, at least for some period of time until that same thing that I described earlier can occur. When they can comfortably believe that participation at home with their children and what is happening

in the schools are congruent, to that extent poor parents do not have to get involved in schools. That is not the case in urban America, and I do not think it is going to be without this kind of participation.

The early organizational efforts addressed the full gamut of socio-economic problems:

M. School-community agents also organized the community to solve all kinds of local problems: blight, juvenile delinquency, crime, etc.

O. When the action committees or groups were formed from which our council eventually developed, people were concerned about a variety of problems. For example, there was general dissatisfaction with the Jeffries housing, and a rent strike was held. They were concerned about drugs and other community problems.

In a report describing the activities of federal project personnel, DeRamus commented:

> Around 1964, the agent found himself moving more into the arena of work with community groups to increase their stability and attempting to mobilize community forces around significant, education-related activities. . . . Almost every neighborhood issue, he discovered, related to the health of the school. He found himself prodding groups to demand city services to prevent blight and slum developments, and helping register voters so the people would have a voice in choosing the persons who would shape the various sectors of their lives, including education.[1]

In summary, Region One was a typical urban inner city community. Residents of this kind of community historically

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[1] DeRamus, p. 16.

had no interaction with institutional power structures. In order to solve problems confronting them, a more formalized, sustained approach than was required in more affluent communities was necessary. Education was only one of the problems the community was attempting to cope with and councils provided a mechanism through which both school and community problems were attacked. Councils also served as communication channels between school and community. It was hoped that this communication would be an asset in the realization of successful educational experiences for children of poverty conditions.

Federally Funded Projects

The movement to organize school-community councils in Region One was accelerated by the presence of federally funded projects. The Total Action Against Poverty program, funded through the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, operated with area citizens committees. A Citizens Governing Board was a component of the Model Neighborhood Program which was established through the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966. Experiences with these projects influenced citizens to seek involvement in programs of other agencies located in their communities, including the schools.

Operating in schools were the Economic Opportunity Act financed programs such as Head Start, and programs funded throug Title One of the Elementary Secondary Act of

1965, which required parental involvement in planning and implementation. The Model Neighborhood Program had a direct impact on school-community councils through the Education Committee of its Citizens Governing Board. The committee functioned with an Education Implementation Team (EDIT) which assisted in the formation of a school-community council at each school located within the model neighborhood community.

Data from the interviews document the assertion that this involvement of citizens with federal programs provided experience, training and activation for organized citizen involvement in the schools:

> M. The early federal programs from their onset demanded some kind of community participation, and as they become fully developed in the late sixties and early seventies, federal officials demanded more and more proof of community interaction. Most of these federal funds went to regions like Region One, hence, early in the game many parents became involved in school interaction. The formalization of community involvement through the decentralization Act 48, was no problem in Region One, due in part, to past experiences in school-community interaction.
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> Within the rubric of Title One was a demand for local school advisory committees by name, by address, and annual evidence of existence. Those committees I think, were the forerunners of the organized community groups that now encounter the school district legally through Public Act 48. If you contrast Region One with those regions with very little community participation, community interaction, or community educational problem solving, you find that those regions were not participants in the early federal programs. In fact, those regions

with histories of limited community interaction are less involved today in federal programs even though Title One eligibility is spread across the city in terms of population distribution. Nevertheless, the outer areas of the city had in the early sixties very little community participation, and I believe today that they have minimal community participation when compared to Region One.

D. In the sixties, the model cities movement really got going. The poverty program had started around 1964 when the community agent program expanded through the use of community action money. A lot of the folk became indigenous lay leaders in the model cities program and had even more experiences, broader experiences, and gained more insights and training, and developed more sophistication through that process.

The urban renewal projects also had an influence on citizen involvement in the schools. Citizens organized themselves to fight decisions of city ogvernment relative to the federally funded urban renewal projects, and demanded that the city organize or recognize citizen advisory councils for the porjects. A number of these projects were located in Region One and citizens who were involved in those struggles are now serving in some of the school-community councils.

J. Our councils were shaped in large part as some of the early struggles for survival, experiences with urban renewal and involvement in federal projects started spinning off. The government began to say, "Let's have more voice of the community!" But I think that it was basically survival that motivated the citizens.

L. Urban renewal had an influence on the organization of councils. It set up attitudes on the school board and in the schools. Principals, school staffs and the whole system were afraid of involving community. They saw Dave Neiderhouser, and they saw us, the agents, as Dave Neiderhousers. They saw

the community as a bunch of rabble rousers who didn't know what they wanted. The community saw that the only way to get any influence was by protest, by arguing, by shouting and screaming.

Civil Rights Activities and the Movement for Community Control of Schools

Several persons interviewed listed civil rights activities among the forces impacting on thedevelopment of school-community councils. Of these activities, the movement for community control of schools was most directly related.

A. There was much taking place in the sixties which I feel had a direct impact on the councils, their sense of mission and function. Certainly, a great many civil rights activities directly impacted on the schools' standing in the community.

   This was a period in which the so-called identity crisis in members of the black community took full form and was expressed in many ways.

   There was a growing strain that we began to feel in the relationship of schools and community, sufficient that it caused the development of what we called in that period the movement for community control of schools. This movement had its basis in the black community's belief that schools in that community had lost their natural links and ties, and that teachers and administrators, and indeed, the school establishment were in a sense operating outside of the community's perception of appropriate educational goals and objectives. The campaign for community use of schools gained a good deal of force in Detroit, in New York City, and some other places. The Ocean Hill-Brownsville experience in Brooklyn, New York was really one about community control of schools.

> As this movement grew and developed, it carried with it a growing sense of alienation, even among some of the school staff. Some of it was a fresh awareness of what was lost in the way of the school's link with the community. In order to put this relationship back into its proper focus, some of us began to think about the development of the community councils which would involve a kind of activist role for community parents. We saw this role as one which would attempt to identify with school people, teachers and administrators alike, and solidify the common interests and common objectives in education to be shared by the community and the people who were responsible for running the schools.
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> In the black community, we were looking at a school experience that was basically operating out of sanctions with which the black community had very little to do. That community had become fully aware that it had not had input into decisions about matters such as the appropriateness of the textbooks, or of who the principals were; and no one, including the school board, really thought seriously about the right of the black community to have such input.
>
> The development of councils was an expression of a genuine need for rebuilding or reforming the school-community relationship in the black community, and in that reform, bringing the school and community into complete partnership with each other so that they were really dealing with the same goals and aspirations.

A "Black Community - Black Educators Conference" held at Wayne State University in February 1968 recommended the establishment of "citizens governing bodies at the constellation level to assess and institute changes."[1] The confer-

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[1] "Black Community-Educators Conference Recommendations." McGregor Conference Center, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, February 26, 1968, (mimeographed), p. 5.

ence defined community control as including all aspects the school administration, policy making bodies and finance. It was proposed that certain administrators be gotten rid of and that an example be made of a black administrator who was not accountable to the community as a way of re-educating all black administrators regarding their responsibilities. Black administrators were exhorted to mobilize the community to change the system, and to alert the community to the inadequacies in the schools. Grievance committees in schools to hear parent concerns were advocated.

The conference also addressed other issues, namely the curriculum, the need to place black administrators in inner city schools, textbooks, accountability and punishment of children.

One recommendation pertained to school-community agents. It read:

> School-Community Agents must address themselves to the educational needs of the Black community and be free to serve and be accountable to the Black Community.[1]

Mrs. Grace Boggs, one of the leaders of Detroit's movement for community control of schools, met with the agents at least once to acquaint them with the philosophies of themovement.

Many of the demands of the early councils were compatible with community control philosophies. These in-

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[1] Ibid., p. 5.

cluded demands for accountability, for black administrators, for textbooks related to the black experience and for redress of grievances relating to perceived unfair disciplinary actions against black students. Leaders of the movement supported and offered guidance to many of the fledgling councils.

In addition to the specific movement for community control of schools was a general movement for self determination. One of its manifestations was citizen rejection of practices considered paternalistic. Another was the demand for accountability and adequate service from a wide range of institutions in the community.

K. I believe there were civil right forces and other national movements advocating that power be disseminated and shared.

D. I really want to give a lot of emphasis and creidt to the civil rights movement. One of the lessons it taught was the importance of being involved in shaping events. Too many times black citizens had been told what to do, and the civil rights struggle provided an opportunity to help shape events. I remember a Mr. Williams in Region One in those early days. He was one of the persons who comes to my mind who was articulate about not being planned for, not even doing the initial planning or getting things started, but in letting them do that planning. I think that was learned in the civil rights struggle.

L. I would say that it was the black movement that had the most influence at the state level that caused the whole momentum for decentralization. People were involved in organizations like C.O.R.E. and S.N.C.C. Even to this day, people know that the Black Church controls Region One.

In summary, the community control of schools movement and the civil rights movement encouraged black and inner city communities to reject efforts of others to plan for them in favor of planning for themselves, and to look critically at the services rendered them by all institutions, including the schools. Councils were promoted by some members of the school system as a means of accommodating the press for community control of schools. It was hoped that councils could provide a vehicle through which the common objectives of the community and school system could be identified, thus bringing together rather than further separating school and community.

The philosophies and goals of the movement for community control of schools influenced the way the councils developed and organized. The movement helped identify a common group of issues which were embraced by the early councils.

Feelings of Parent Powerlessness

Several participants in this study referred to feelings of powerlessness on the part of parents whose interest in schools had traditionally been disregarded:

> A. It is a normal expression of community life in a poverty neighborhood that parents of the children in those schools are not regarded as having any power to do anything about their condition. Their interest in the education of their children has been traditionally neglected and also disregarded, because you have a school establishment that is basically middle class in its orientation,

even the black school staff. This is not a criticism, it is just a fact of the way the educational experience influences social attitudes. I was always much concerned that many of the parents, the mothers in particular, who were basically left with the task of looking after their children in the schools in Region One, were regarded as having no power. Here is where we saw what really could happen in straining and ultimately breaking the legitimate ties between school and community because the parents were regarded as having no power, and perhaps not even having the right to assert themselves in the way they ultimately did in Region One.

C. Before councils, you could go into the schools, but you had to be invited. We had the boy scouts and the girl scouts, but all of these things happened after school. They were not in the decision making part of the school day, unle-s it was just to do something about the PTA or PTSO, as we did not have councils then. Parent roles were limited to social activities in the schools. But when lots of children were coming out of school who couldn't read everybody became concerned about finding some other way to get involved in education.

D. Opportunities came through the agent program to exercise some decision making in local schools, but that decision making was token. It was not a real kind of decision making about real issues in schools like personnel issues, curricular issues, or selection of text books. School people had not come to grips with citizen involvement and were absolutely astounded that people felt they had the right and wherewithal to make those decisions.

L. They were talking about involvement in curriculum, in personnel, in the budget, even in those days. Community people knew what they wanted and the areas in need of their input.

This feeling of powerlessness was sometimes so pervasive that citizens were not aware thaty they had in some

instances, exercised power effectively:

A. I arranged a meeting with a group of school-community residents to discuss the appointment of a new school-community agent. We had designed a plan for this that essentially shared with the parents the qualifications of the individual. We invited them to give us input regarding the qualifications they felt the agent should have and to help us determine the kind of person they thought would best serve their community. As we proceeded with that discussion, one of the community residents said, "We intend to have a say about who is going to be the school-community agent." And as he began to talk, I was made terribly aware of the fact that we were actually participating in a process which fostered parental involvement. Parents, however, were so accustomed to not having a voice, that even as they participated, even as we invited that voice, they were reluctant to recognize that what they sought was in fact taking place. I will not forget that.

L. One of the roles school-community agents played was in helping people see connections. Sometimes people experience things and they don't know what they are experiencing while it is taking place. Afterwards is important when they can look back and you ask, "See what you have gone through?" "Do you remember going through that?" And they began seeing the connection. But if we as professionals weren't there connecting all the time, people sometimes fail to see the natual progression either in growth, or in being placed in a trick bag. That is, when they are being either handled or mishandled.

Citizens Organizations, Leaders and Community Organizers

In the sixties, a proliferation of citizen organizations and citizen leaders addressed a variety of community concerns, one of which was the schools. These organizations provided citizens with the necessary skills needed to work with bureaucrats and bureaucracies. David Cason, a professional community organizer in the sixties who also served as the

first director of Detroit's model neighborhood agency observed:

> In the majority of conflicts I had witnessed between agencies and lower class citizen organizations, the citizens seldom won the decision. . . . Eventually the citizens' organizations just disappeared.[1]

A number of the organizations of the sixties did disappear but many of the members remained in Region One and their competencies have enhanced the council movement. Comments from the interviewees substantiate this:

J. I think where you have highly involved communities, and sub-community organizations, you find councils flourishing. I think the weaker councils are probably composed of people who are not exposed to organizational behavior, who do not know processes of human behavior. When communities experience a crisis, they move to develop a structure for problem solving. After the crisis passes, unless they have some well established bases, the structure will not survive.

M. The work of agents and the work of other community people developed all kinds of grassroots organizations and I couldn't begin to list the acronyms for those organizations, but they sprung up all over the inner city. Those grassroots organizations have become, in many cases, the nucleus of the involvement of community people today.

G. Some of our training came from being involved. We had been involved in organizations such as Pelham Community Services. We were involved also in developing the day care center at the House of the Carpenter. We have sat on all kinds of boards: Mental Health, Henry Ford Hospital, etc. which provided good experience. Some of us learned the hard way by being used and manipulated.

The persons interveiwed also recalled citizen organizations and citizen leaders whose activities impacted on the

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[1]Cason, p. 2.

development of councils:

J. There were people, particular personalities, who had influence. I remember in the Crossman area we had Truman Reed, who is still active. We had Witherspoon and Boyce, who worked with the Virginia Park Association.

O. Also along in the sixties if I remember, cities, including Detroit, had the Black Panthers. On the east side there was the East Side Voice of Independent Detroit (ESVID), and consequently on the west side, in this community, the Black Defenders, who also had tee shirts and the black berets; but they came to cooperate and see what we could do together.

L. During that period, probably the greatest man was Mayor Cavanagh. When he went with that citizens governing board, he had guts, because he came out and allowed that board to form. Had he stayed on as mayor, I believe he would have been brave enough to allow the citizens government board to develop into a viable organization.

D. Ken Cockrel and Frank Ditto were names you could use as a subtle threat. The reluctance of the schools to become involved in conflict with them was often responsible for school participation in a more reasonable kind of negotiation system.

Several of the interviewees made reference to the Reverend Albert Cleage, National Chairperson of the Black Christian Nationalist (BCN) movement which is headquartered in Region One. Reverend Cleage was pastor of the Shrine of the Black Madonna in the sixties, from which BCN developed. He and The Shrine sponsored and/or were associated with several organizations which had influenced on the development on councils. Some of these were the Inner City Parents Council, the Citywide Citizens Action Committee, Black Teachers' Caucus and Citizens for Community Control of Schools. Some of the references to Reverend Cleage follow:

J. We have to give tribute to Albert Cleage. He was one of the very first influences. He was one of the prime movers in terms of saying "Let's look at the schools." He took a stand against a millage campaign one time that distrubed school people. This kind of behavior was unnerving to school administrators.

K. I do think that the presence of the Cleage group which was also a part of the times. . . impacted in propelling Region One in the direction it took.

Some portions of the community rallied around the Cleage movement. Other parts organized in defense of what they considered too much militancy. Councils were useful in developing community consensus from the various points of view.

L. Even to this day, people know that the Black Church controls Region One. But also to this day, if Reverend Cleage attended a meeting in this basement, I believe he would turn 90% of Region One's people off.

The Positive Neighborhood Action Committee (PNAC) functioned mainly in the Northeastern High School constellation and worked to achieve community involvement at the local school level. Through PNAC, local committees were organized at most of the schools in that area.

D. There was resistance to the nieghborhood action committees from the schools, although the committees increased in strength despite this opposition. In the case of Knudsen, when the principal was let go, it was really the Knudsen Neighborhood Action Committee that was at the base of that action; a bit or organizing had been done in that area by staff from Franklin Settlement House and by Frank Ditto.

The West Central Organization (WCO), with headquarters in Region One, utilized consultant services of Saul Alinsky, a community organizer with a national reputation. Although

primarily concerned with urban renewal and its citizen councils, the organization also influenced schools in the region. The first director of WCO was former school-community agent, David Neiderhouser.

D. I think WCO played a real part. Those very traumatic days, the early sixties, provided us with a kind of classic example of what can happen if one doesn't really work with the citizens and within the bureaucracy. WCO reflected a kind of final style of operating that was really controversial and conflictual. Partly because it was so identified with Saul Alinsky, who of course was a very well known organizer primarily known for his far out tactics. We could say, "Well how would you like to have Saul Alinsky in your school?" and that would scare the principals enough to get action.

L. Take WCO. Neiderhouser had been talking about things like councils even as an agent, so perhaps even from the beginning when we did our role paper, we had been coming this way. In 1965, I recall some of us talking about the need, although at that point we couldn't even imagine it happening. We couldn't see it, but Dave Neiderhouser saw it. He wanted this kind of thing, and Dave had his own complete package of what he wanted. He moved out of the school. I think he gave up on the school system and tried to deal with Mayor Cavanah, in forcing the citizen advisory councils for the model cities program.

M. Organizations like WCO which were influenced by Saul Alinsky's Chicago base, had influence in that part of the community. I don't think it ever developed to the extent that Alinsky's Chicago organization developed for many reasons too numerous to mention. I have no expertise in that area, but that part of our history was scary for the school district. The district, even at the top level did not want a broad based opponent in the community and I believe that is what Saul Alinsky characterized in the minds of a bureaucracy like ours. I don't think the school system was

ready for nor wanted a broad based involvement and almost a counter bureaucracy to watch dog them and make demands in a more organized way. I think the school system then was more willing to cope with problems on a school-by-school basis and perhaps on a regional basis bacause there were no alternatives.

Detroit had a flourishing block club structure with community councils made up of representatives of block clubs in a geographic area in the late fifties and early sixties. Formal training in leadership skills was provided on a regular basis to the leaders of these groups. Agents turned to these organizations for much of the early leadership in school related organizations.

D. Probably in Detroit one ought to go back further and give some credit to the development of the block club movement that was a kind of phenomena in the City of Detroit, even in the fifties. I always think of Mel Ravitz when he was in the city planning commission at that time and the whole block club movement, which was really amazing and had impact on the inner city. It was probably more peripheral, but still there were some groups organized in those early days in inner city Detroit. When the school-community agent program began officially in 1960, and the emphasis was community and school relationships, a logical way to go was through the block clubs to identify leadership and then strengthen or do more to develop that leadership as it related to schools or as it related to any other kind of entity in the community.

L. The block clubs and block club councils gave people a beginning and early experience. It was as block club members that they learned the first skills.

In summary, a number or organizations and citizen leaders helped set the stage for Region One's councils. Organizations such as those associated with the Shrine of the Black Madonna developed evaluation standards for schools which

assisted councils in determining issues to address. The block club organizations helped train grassroots leadership in organizational skills. The West Central Organization (WCO) and East Side Voice of Independent Detroit (ESVID) were examples of organizations which provided training in strategies designed to force bureaucratic responsiveness to citizen demands. Many of these strategies were abrasive and disruptive. Groups like the Positive Neighborhood Action Committee (PNAC) pioneered in organizing neighborhood citizens committees at the local school level which addressed problems identified by citizens. Some of the organizers were feared by school people because of the disruptive tactics they employed. Principals usually elected to negotiate with local community groups in preference to having certain individuals brought into the schools to assist citizens in achieving their objectives. These individuals were generally described as "militants," a designation which had negative connotations for most school people.

A list of names of organizations and individuals who influenced the development of Region One's councils appears in Appendix I.

Perceptions of Educational Inadequacies

The literature of the community control of schools movement which was prevalent in the sixties, indicated that citizens felt they had to become actively involved with schools because their children were not learning. This conclusion

was derived from achievement test scores and first hand observation. This perception provided some of the impetus for the council movement in Region One.

R. I think one thing that started in the sixties was that parents became aware that the school system was not fulfilling their desires. Our feeling was that we had been allowing somebody elst to be responsible for our children's education and it was not working. During that time parents found that the children could not read and they decided to do something themselves. And when the councils came along, that was the vehicle that we jumped on because we felt we could get in there and have something to say.

One thing that brought our attention to educational inadequacies in this community was that we found that our kids could not fill out applications when they applied for jobs. We had kids who couldn't even spell their own names. We had parents saying, "I only went to the fifth grade and my children have graduated and are coming to me to ask how to spell words." And with that I think people began to take a hard look at what was going on in schools.

M. The black communities had nice custodial schools, but the kids weren't learning and the schools seemed to be satisfied with that as if kids really couldn't learn.

D. The primary issue was the lack of education for black kids.

Perceived Inadequacy of Existing School-Community Organizations

In January 1962, there were 162 Parent Teacher Associations and eighty-eight independent parent organizations, primarily mothers' clubs, in existence in Detroit's public schools. Only one school in Region One was listed as having

no parent organization. Thirty-three of these bodies had been organized since 1956.[1] In June 1962 the Board of Education approved a recommendation that appropriate measures be encouraged or taken to "see that such organizations are formed."[2]

Participants in a workshop entitled "How to Mobilize" at the Black Community-Educators Conference held in 1963 declared:

> Grievance committees must be set up as a means of coping with parents' grievances and complaints. The PTA's are completely ineffectual organizations for parents because they are controlled by the school administration.[3]

A report issued in 1968 by the Superintendent's Task Force on School-Community Relations listed the following among major problems:

> . . .a need to develop staff skills for sharing with the community certain educational problems. The local school is often isolated from its broad community. It has contact largely with parents. New ways of reaching community leadership can be devised. Such leadership is not always found in the P.T.A.[4]

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[1]Board Action and Staff Commentaries on the Recommendations Submitted in March, 1962 by the Citizens Advisory Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities, p. sc-10.

[2]Ibid., p. sc-9

[3]Black Community-Educators Conference Recommendations, p. 3.

[4]"Report of the Superintendent's Task Force on School-Community Relations," Detroit Public Schools, February 26, 1968 (mimeographed), p. 14.

In 1969, central staff committees charged with developing and recommending procedures for effective and orderly involvement of parents and students with school faculties and administrators in the process of decision making in our secondary schools, reported the following:

> The experience of recent months has proved that new policies, procedures and structures are necessary in order to provide for real and substantive involvement of all parties--students, parents and staff--to the educative process.[1]

Persons interviewed volunteered these comments:

D. It was necessary to develop another kind of structure because some schools did not have any kind of parent organization, and some of the existing organizations were composed of hand-picked members.

L. The agents were blamed for causing the P.T.A. to go out of existence by organizing councils, when no way was P.T.A. going to meet the need.

G. The same things could not have been achieved with the parents' club because it had a different kind of structure. It actually did deal with fund raising and socials, the kinds of activities people have described as the only roles of parent groups before we had councils. It just wasn't geared to fulfill the purpose of councils.

The P.T.A. was aware of and concerned about the movement toward councils. A meeting announcement dated November 21, 1969, and captioned "URGENT - CRISIS MEETING" lists as an agenda item, "PTA Role in Citizens Community Councils."

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[1] "Proposal for Establishment of Student-Parent-Faculty Commissions and Student-Faculty Councils in Secondary Schools." Memorandum from Arthur L. Johnson, Chairman; William S. Billups; Arnold R. Meier; Charles L. Wells to Dr. Norman Drachler, December 30, 1969.

Summary

Region One's council development had its origins in the 1960's largely through the efforts of school-community agents with the support of the Great Cities Project and Central Division of School-Community Relations. Efforts to organize councils were resisted by other parts of the system.

The first councils adhered to no consistent patterns of organization, but usually included parents, non-parents, and representatives of community organizations in their memberships.

Major activities were: 1) participating in program evaluation and planning, 2) supporting school programs, 3) facilitating relationships between the school and community, 4) raising issues, 5) sponsoring money raising and socializing events, 6) evaluating staff effectiveness, 7) participating in staff selection, and 8) orientation and involvement of parents.

The councils experienced some accomplishments: 1) They provided structures in which diverse community groups worked together on educational problems; 2) the image of schools as "closed" inaccessible institutions began changing; 3) the community learned about and tested procedures and channels for making changes in the school system; 4) staffing patterns in schools were influenced; and 5) councils gained a reputation as workable school-community communication strategies in the community.

Councils were effective vehicles for bringing schools and communities together to handle concerns hitherto con-

sidered the exclusive domain of schools. They were effective in resolving conflict by providing arenas for orderly confrontations. Councils were particularly successful in arriving at personnel problems solutions acceptable to both the school system and community.

Competencies important to the roles of council members included the ability to 1) identify and use community leadership, 2) obtain action from a bureaucracy, 3) function as a group, and 4) plan. Evaulation, supporting programs, raising issues, fund raising, sponsoring social events, staff selection, involving and orienting parents were also important.

The forces which impacted on the development, patterns of organization, activities and perceived accomplishments of councils were 1) the school system's citizens advisory committees, commissions and task forces. 2) the Division of School-Community Relations, 3) the Great Cities School Improvement Project, 4) school-community agents, 5) socio-economic conditions, 6) federally funded projects, 7) civil rights activities and the movement for community control of schools, 8) feelings of parent powerlessness, 9) citizen organizations, leaders and community organizers, 10) perceptions of educational inadequacies and 11) perceived inadequacies of existing school-community organizations.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT SINCE DECENTRALIZATION, 1971 to 1978

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the development of local school-communit councils in Region One, Detroit Public Schools during the period, 1971 to 1978. A secondary purpose was to identify and analyze forces which influenced the development of community councils, their structure and the way they function.

Questions to Guide the Study

The following questions will be addressed:

1. How did the Region One local school-community councils develop during this period?
2. What were the patterns of organization?
3. What were the major activities of the councils?
4. What were the councils' perceived accomplishments?
5. What specific competencies were perceived by school staff and council members as being important to the role of a council member.

6. What forces impacted on the development, patterns of organization, activities and perceived accomplishments of the councils?

1. How Did the Region One Local School-Community Councils Develop During this Period? 1971-1978

Data from the preceding chapter indicated that much occurred in the sixties which influenced the development of the councils in the 1970's. Interviewees agreed with these assertions:

A. The function of the councils and the kind of operating responsibility taken on by them were shaped out of the experiences that we described in the sixties.

B. By the seventies, there had been a lot of conflict and a lot of experience gained in the sixties that I think counted for something. School people acquired a lot more tolerance for citizen input and began to see the positive aspects of community involvement. They began to see and believe that community people did have an interest in improving public schools.

The Region One Board of Education came into existence as a result of the decentralization of the Detroit Public School System in 1971 by the state legislature. This legislation simultaneously legitimized and expanded the development of school-community councils in Region One. Public Act 48 divided the school system into eight regions, each with a five member board of education responsible for the

schools within the regional boundaries. This enabling legislation retained the Central Board of Education but increased its membership to thirteen, five "at large" members and the chairperson of each region board. Certain schools which traditionally provided service for the entire city rather than a surrounding neighborhood remained under central board jurisdiction.

The Central Board retained the final authority for most regional decisions. All powers not specifically addressed in Public Act 48 were delegated to the central or regional boards in a document entitled Guidelines for Regional and Central Boards of Education. This document was commonly referred to as "decentralization guidelines." There was extensive community input into the formulation of the guidelines.

Influences of the community control of schools movement and the wide spread citizen inovlvement efforts in Region One during the sixties were described in Chapter Two. From this history it was not surprising that the item in the decentralization guidelines which gave regions the power to increase citizen involvement received early attention from the first Region One Board of Education. The Board immediately embarked on a plan to make citizen involvement a reality. A summary of the processes used is found in Appendix H. The first Region One Board of Education's term began January 1, 1971.

The Region One Board of Education's Approach to the Organization of School-Community Councils

An exploratory meeting held with school-community agents revealed that a variety of school-community structures existed that would facilitate citizen involvement in schools. These included advisory councils, the Parent Teacher Association, Parent-Teacher-Student Organization, and mothers' clubs. There were local school organizations as well as organizations which provided service to groups of schools. Some schools had several organizations attached to them. Region board members, however, saw a need to have one official organization with which they could communicate, and which would be their representative at the local school level. The Region Board believed community people had the right to plan for themselves, therefore the board refused to impose a standardized structure for organizing community councils. The board decided to immediately publicize its goal of recognizing a viable local community involvement mechanism, and to solicit community suggestions.

Field Coordinator Lucius May reported:

> Soon after taking office the Region I Board asked the Field Coordinator to design a Model School Advisory Council. The Field Cocrdinator assisted by a task force of School Community Agents, complied with the request and submitted a design complete with Objectives and Functions. Shortly thereafter Region I Board announced at its public meetings that School Advisory Councils were being considered and community input was invited.

> Twenty persons, the majority of them community residents, responded by forming an Ad Hoc Committee to plan the Objectives, Functions and Guidelines for a local School Citizen Council. . .Board member Longworth Quinn chaired the meetings.
>
> The Ad Hoc Committee accomplished the following tasks which were recommended to the Region One Board for action:
>
> 1. The name of the council should be the School-Community Council.
>
> 2. Formulated Objectives and Functions.
>
> 3. Established recommended guidelines.
>
> 4. Established some procedures for legitimizing the organization of School-Community Councils, e.g., official resolution, public meeting mandate, authorized Region Superintendent to proceed, establish roster of public meeting conveners.[1]

In addition to these recommendations, the ad hoc committee suggested that the term "advisory" be eliminated from the official title given to councils.

The ad hoc committee painstakingly reviewed all suggestions and models from the community, finally determining that the agent developed model most nearly sufficed. Some minor modifications were made to assure compatibility with the Board's determination to permit as much neighborhood self determination as possible. The committee also developed the language in the resolution passed by the Region Board on February 11, 1971 to establish councils. It read:

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[1]Lucius J. May, "Annual Report - School-Community Councils," Memorandum to the Region One Board of Education. Detroit, Michigan, August 1971 (Mimeographed).

> RESOLUTION: Whereas the Guidelines for Regional and Central Boards of Education of the School District of the City of Detroit provide that the regional board for schools under its jurisdiction may recognize the establishment of a permanent democratic structure for effective neighborhood participation in the decision-making processes of the local school. Be it resolved that each local school-community within Region #1 shall have a permanent democratic structure for effective neighborhood participation in the decision-making process of the local school.[1]

The Region Board approved objectives and functions for councils were not intended to establish limits as much as to legitimize council involvement in all aspects of school decision-making. The goal seemed to be to deliver to the community as much control as possible through the councils.

Board members felt strongly that each community should design its own council organization. The "Suggested Guidelines" were made available more as a point of reference for decisions than as a model, although in practice it was considered the official model. To further guard against charges of imposing a structure, the Board publicized, but did not formally approve these suggested organizational guidelines. On February 18, 1971, the following motion was passed: "A school-community wide public meeting shall be called at each school by authority of the Region Board.[2]

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[1]Minutes of the Region One Board of Education. Detroit, Michigan, February 11, 1971.

[2]Minutes of the Region One Board of Education, February 18, 1971.

Region Board members generally regarded administrators as adversaries aligned with "the system". The board members were therefore very reluctant to leave the implementation of the council project to the Region Superintendent or building administrators. They prefereed having the councils organized by the community with the assistance of school-community agents. Most of the board members had worked closely with agents in their local communities. In fact, during this era, the agents were generally perceived as community advocates, so much so that they were somewhat suspect by the system. Two of the persons interviewed recalled this as follows:

> M. The advocacy that was developed in those early days continued to such an extent that for a few years school-community agents were regarded as rebels within the school district and were not particularly wanted in terms of their involvement on behalf of the community . . . .
>
> D. We released the agents from a lot of tasks that were building bound and we expected them to get more out into the community and to establish a base in a sense in the community. I think for the most part, that happened, which later paid off in the survival of the program. It is interesting in retrospect, because here was a program being financed by one organization but really being supported by the opposition.

The agent supervisory staff insisted, however, that the only way the project would succeed would be by charging the Region Superintendent with the responsibility of implementing this board policy. They argued that this was the way to get the system operating in support of the project.

The Region Board members generally regarded administrators as adversaries aligned with "the system". The Board members were therefore very reluctant to leave the implementation of the council project to the Region Superintendent or building administrators. They preferred having the councils organized by the community with the assistance of school-community agents. Most of the board members had worked closely with agents in their local communities. In fact, during this era, the agents were generally perceived as community advocates, so much so that they were somewhat suspect by the system. Two of the persons interviewed recalled this as follows:

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The agent supervisory staff insisted, however, that the only way the project would succeed would be by charging the Region Superintendent with the responsibility of implementing this board policy. They argued that this was the way to get the system operating in support of the project.

The Board elected to heed this advice and gave the charge to the Region Superintendent, who subsequently designated two field coordinators of school-community agents to carry out the Board's mandate.

It was clearly understood by the project coordinators that each school neighborhood was to have as much freedom as possible to develop the kind of council that would best serve that neighborhood. There was also to be maximum citizen involvement in all aspects of the organizational process. The project coordinators, working with a small staff committee, and with assistance from Region Board member Quinn, established a timetable for organizing community councils.[1]

Members of the community were selected to serve as "public meeting conveners" and were trained to conduct the meetings. A public meeting was to be held in each of the forty-one school communities by May 1, 1971. The first was held March 2, 1971 at Sherrard Junior High School. On April 29, 1971, a coordinator reported that initial public meetings had been held in thirty-seven schools, two meetings would be held the first week in May, one school had been phased out of existence, and two schools had no meetings scheduled.[2]

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[1]A copy of the timetable is in Appendix I.

[2]Lucius J. May. "Status Report to the Region # 1 Board, School-Community Councils." Memorandum. Detroit, Michigan, April 29, 1971 (Mimeographed).

Stabilization of the Organized Councils

Several events took place which were designed to stabilize and strengthen the organized councils. They are described in the following paragraphs:

Council Recognition Ceremonial

At the June 10, 1971 meeting of the Region One Board of Education, all recently organized councils were publicly recognized. Each council chairperson was called to the front of the auditorium and congratulated. When interviewed for this study, the current Region Superintendent commented, "Our board meetings have a sort of church atmosphere. . . ." This feeling was certainly prevalent at the recognition meeting as the chairpersons came forward and received what in a church situation would have been described as the "right hand of fellowship" from the three assistant superintendents, and the project coordinators. This was a very solemn yet joyful occasion, and the pride of accomplishment was very evident in the behavior of the community, staff and board members.

School-Community Council Convention

To help the fledgling councils get a better sense of who and what they were, the project coordinators proposed a council convention be held to accomplish the aforementioned task. The idea was heartily endorsed by the Region Board,

and a planning committee composed of citizen and staff volunteers was convened. The first convention took place June 12, 1971 at Wayne State University, and was attended by nearly four hundred persons. State Senator Coleman Yound, now Mayor of Detroit, was the speaker. In his speech, he complimented the Region One community, and said, "I am proud of what you have done. I hope that every region in this city does what you have done. . . ."[1]

Regional Committee Meetings

The annual convention described in the preceding paragraph featured workshops in all standing committee areas that were suggested in the guidelines for organizing councils. Following this experience, the region board committee chairpersons began holding regular meetings with their council counterparts. Problems and information were shared, and considerable training occurred.

Community Education Classes

Board Member Longworth Quinn assisted in organizing a series of classes taught by volunteer teachers in the region board offices after working hours. The classes were designed to help members of the community and staff understand major current community issues and gain essential skills for functioning in the councils.

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[1]Report of Region One School-Community Council Convention, 1971.

Employment of a School-Community Relations Administrator

One of the council project coordinators was made a full time member of the region staff in the capacity of School-Community Relations Administrator. Nurturing the council organization was considered the primary responsibility of that job.

2. What Were the Patterns of Organization?

When councils were mandated, the region board did not include a required organizational structure. The board, however, did insist that each community decide on a structure and place the rules governing it on file in the region office. Suggested guidelines were prepared which in practice were regarded as region board policy guides by the persons who conducted the organizational meetings.

The primary decisions made at the public organizational meetings were whether existing organizations or new structures would be the official councils. Examples of the decisions school communities made at the public organizational meetings are listed below:

Chaney - The community decided to have the Parent Club recognized as its council.

Couzens - Existing Advisory Council recognized as the official School-Community Council with certain modifications in its operating structure.

Edmonson - The citizens felt that there was not adequate representation at the first meeting. . . . At the second meeting, a new organization was

established and an election of members held.

Jefferson - The Council finally came into existence at the third public meeting.

Kennedy - A new council was agreed upon and officers elected.

Murray Wright- The decision was made to modify the operating structure of the Parent-Student-Teacher Association so that it may serve as the Council.

Owen - First Public Meeting resulted in a decision to form a new council. At the second meeting on April 29, Pro Tem officers were elected.[1]

By December 1971, by-laws for nineteen of the forty councils had been submitted to the region office. The study, "A Look at School-Community Councils in Region One" provided the following analysis:

> Eighteen of 19 councils established the requirement that members must reside or work within the school boundaries. One council limits its membership to parents of children in school and school staff members. With one exception, the councils supported the philosophy of the Region Board which perceives all persons residing within a given community, both parent and non-parent, as important contributors to the educational process.
>
> Eleven of 19 councils have a membership formula detainling the number of council members to be selected from various categories, i.e., teachers, parents, and non-parent citizens.

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[1]Eleanor I. Barnwell, "Field Coordinator of School-Community Agents Monthly Report." Detroit, Michigan, April 1971, pp. 8-10.

Objectives and functions adopted by the Region Board were included, in part, in all by-laws submitted. Two councils added an additional function that was not a part of those detailed by the Region Board". . . to support political action and candidates who are promoting the welfare of the community and the quality of education."

Duties of officers were clearly defined in 16 councils, and procedures for the election of officers were specified in all by-laws filed.

Procedures for the selection of committee chairmen were specified in 13 councils. However, only four councils detailed duties and responsibilities of chairmen. . . .

Other areas covered in the by-laws which had majority agreement among councils were: procedures for the selection of members, regulations for filling vacancies, establishment of regular meeting dates, time and place, term of office for officers and chairmen, and the number of persons constituting a quorum.

Three of the councils had rules relating to the payment of membership dues.

Council membership ranged from about 10 to 50 members, with the average being approximately 20.

The functions and powers of the executive board were clearly defined in 9 of 19 councils.

It can be concluded that the councils are establishing an organizational structure that is not too different from other established organizations. It is important to remember that the poeple who were to be governed by the organization had an opportunity to establish the mode of operation.[1]

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[1]"A Look at Local School-Community Councils in Region One," p.3.

Analysis of the data from the above study revealed that early council organizations tended to adopt the organizational suggestions contained in the guidelines. Data in a report of the patterns of organization compiled in 1976[1] indicated that these patterns were still in use. According to this report, councils were organized in three basic ways. These were described as 1) elected voting membership, 2) open voting membership, and 3) modified open voting membership.

Elected Voting Membership

Elected councils were structured to assure that all groups concerned had proportional representation. The number of voting members was limited although meetings were open for public input and discussion. The voting memberships were usually composed of pre-determined numbers of parents, elected in an open public meeting of parents; teachers, elected by the teaching staff; non-teaching staff members elected by the non-teaching staff; and students elected by the student council. Councils usually included designated numbers of block club representatives, agency representatives, citizens-at-large, and/or representatives of other school organizations. Once councils were elected,

[1] A copy of this report is in Appendix C.

the members selected officers and committee chairpersons.

The following description of an elected council's structure was reported by one of the interviewees:

> G. At Franklin, an elected council was structured. It included parents from the nursery, parents from the parent organization, community people, representatives of community organizations, the business community and churches. It also included representatives from the school staff and the student council.

This was the pattern recommended in the suggested guidelines, and 55% of the councils were organized in this way.

Open Voting Membership

In these councils, anyone present at a meeting who lived or worked in the school community could vote on all issues, including the election of officers. Executive committees were usually very strong and did most of the actual decision-making. Nine percent of Region One's councils were organized in this way.

Modified Open Voting Membership

Persons had to qualify to vote in councils which operated with modified voting memberships. The requirement was usually attendance at a designated number of meetings. This requirement in some councils only applied to the right to vote on certain issues, for example in the election of officers. Other examples of the requirements appear in Appendix C. Thirty-six percent of the councils

used this organizational pattern.

Data from the above report indicated that 63% of the chairpersons were either parents or community residents, and 12% were teachers. The percentage of councils chaired by men declined from 33% in 1971 to 24% in 1978. The percentage of councils with employees at that school serving as chairperson has declined slightly from 25% in 1971 to 21% in 1978.[1]

In 1976, a federal court ruling was issued requiring the establishment of a school-community relations committee at each Detroit public school. Since Region One's councils were so nearly in compliance with all of the guidelines, it was agreed that the councils would serve as these committees.[2] This meant that all councils were required to have at least twenty members, including members of the community, staff and student body. At least one-half of the members were to be community residents, and if the school was involved in busing for desegregation, at least two parents of bused students were to be included. There was also a requirement that at least two persons could not be members of existing organizations. A major effect of the court order was to eliminate the "open membership" councils.

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[1]Data derived from records in Region One's School-community Relations Office.

[2]See Appendix J, "Fulfilling the Requirements for Region One Court Mandated School-Community Relations Committees.

Shortly after the court order was issued, the Region Superintendent convened a task force to develop recommendations which would help increase parental and general community involvement in the councils. This task force recommended minimum membership requirements for Region One's councils which would also guarantee compliance with the court order. The requirements, which were approved by councils and the Region Board, were as follows:

> Each Region One council should have a minimum of twenty voting members with the following representation:
>
> 1. Community representatives who live within the school's service boundaries at least 75% of the voting membership.
>
> 2. Parents of students attending the school involved - at least 50% of the community representatives.
>
>   a. In schools to which students have been assigned for purposes of desegregation, at least two parents of the reassigned students must be voting members.
>
>   b. At least two new parent voting members should be added each year who have not belonged to any existing school organization.
>
> 3. Staff
>
>   All staff persons are to be counted as staff. A staff person is defined as any person employed at the local school more than one-half time.
>
> 4. Students[1]

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[1] A copy of this report is in Appendix F.

Policies adopted by the Region Board in 1974, required that councils hold elections monitored by the School-Community Relations Department at least biennially.[1] By 1976, elections were being held annually by 70% of the councils, and the remaining 30% held them biennially.

In 1973, the Region Board began annually certifying councils based on documentation that their organizational patterns complied with regional standards.[2]

All councils had the following standing committees: 1) Budget and Finance, 2) Buildings and Sites, 3) Curriculum, 4) Personnel, and 5) School-Community Relations. These committees also exist at the region board level. Council committee chairpersons comprised the membership of the region board's committees.[3] Other committees with which councils have functioned were Safety, Health, Political Action, Student Relations, and Teacher Relations.

Committees required by special projects, such as Title One and Chapter III, also functioned under the council umbrella and were usually listed in by-laws of councils as standing committees.

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[1]A copy of these policies is in Appendix G.

[2]A copy of the certification requirements is in Appendix P.

[3]Appendix K contains a chart entitled, "Community Involvement in Region One, 'which depicts these relationships.

Sixty-one percent of the councils limited the number of terms officers could serve and several had special restrictions which applied to officers, e.g., "may not be board employees," "chairperson must be a parent," "may not be employed at this school," etc.[1]

Some councils joined together in organizations known as constellation round tables. The constellation round tables consisted of councils from all schools sending students to the same middle or high school. The round tables provided a mechanism through which problems unique to schools in the same community could be identified and resolved.

3. What Were the Major Activities of the Councils?

Councils have been involved in a broad spectrum of activities which touch on practically every aspect of school life.

Many of the activities were requested by the region board. A summary presentation of these activities prepared by the school-community relations administrator listed the following:

- Meet requirements for certification.
- Evaluate administrators in charge of buildings.
- Have input in the local school's general fund budget decisions.

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[1] See Appendix C.

- Approve Title One budgets.

- Approve Chapter III Budgets.

- Have input in the school's achievement plan by participating in goal setting and participating in evaluation of yearly achievement plan progress.

- Participate in staff selection, consistent with contractural agreements.

- Participate in prioritizing capital improvements.

- Relate to Project Advisory Committees by recommending community representatives and approving project plans.

- Participate in curriculum policy decisions.

- Have representation at region board public and committee meetings.

- Have representation at Title One Council meetings.

- Participate in decisions relating to community use of school buildings.

- Serve as the court ordered school-community relations committees.

- Increase parental involvement in and support for the school.

- Participate in the annual convention.

- Host region board meetings.[1]

The practice has been to require sign-offs from councils before approving any plans or decisions affecting their respective schools.

Insights into the activities of individual councils are provided by annual reports which appear in the annual

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[1]This summary was part of a presentation on school-community relations used in the orientation of new council chairpersons.

convention program booklet. An example follows:

> Franklin School-Community Council
>
> This year the Council (Personnel Committee) conducted interviews to screen Noon Hour Aide applicants and involved 17 Council members actively in the administration evaluation process. Through by-law changes, parent seats on the Council were increased to over 50%, resident positions to over 75%. Buildings and Sites combined with Health and Safety for a cleaner building. The x-ray machine for the Dental Clinic (housed at Franklin) was delivered (through Council efforts) to the school, Council provided refreshments in four student Honors Assemblies after each report card marking. At parents request, the school door bell was turned on during the school day. Our main fund raising project again was the school pictures for students and neighbors.
>
> The Council sponsored an 8 week group activity program for children, in cooperation with Michigan Council for the Arts and Lighted Schoolhouse funds. Council members volunteered for school millage, lunch and hall supervision and bus transportation to the Ethnic Festival. School volunteers from St. Anne's in Warren were honored and received a plaque from the Council.
>
> Speakers invited by Council included a representative from United We Can (on school financing) the music teacher, Reading Coordinator (on D.O.R.T.) and Coordinator (on testing).[1]

Appendix L contains a page from the 1975 convention program booklet which is a composite list of activities in which the various councils were involved during the 1974-1975 school year.

Councils have engaged in a variety of political activities, namely: 1) co-sponsored with the region board a political education program prior to every public election, 2) invited candidates to their meetings, 3) registered

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[1]"Franklin School-Community Council," a report in the program booklet for Region One's 8th Annual School-Community Council Convention, June 8, 1978 (Mimeographed), p. 26.

prospective voters, and have 4) worked together on task forces to save decentralization, prevent school closings, and to prevent undesirable businesses from being established near schools.

The following comments were made by some of the persons interviewed:

O. They invited candidates in to make presentations at council meetings. They don't endorse and they don't like anyone's candidate pushed down their throats.

P. We have proof that more people are registered and voting as a result of council actions.

K. Extensive voter registration drives were sponsored, and there was an effort to insist that our senior high schools registered eighteen year olds.

J. We have gone to common council hearings. We have discussed zoning laws, and issues of that type. Our school has been very active in urban renewal. The schol and the parent role had to be supportive because parents saw the school as a focal point for their survival. The school in turn saw the community as a focal point for survival.

In some of the interviews, the supportive role played by councils was identified, and its importance emphasized:

J. My council has been very supportive in terms of accepting school policies. They have been very supportive in bringing in new programs. If something succeeds, we all succeed together. If it fails, we fail together. There is unity, both in the success and the failure.

K. The idea of support cannot be passed over lightly. It is a very, very significant thing. The fact that the lay leadership in Region One wholeheartedly endorsed activities and programs that the professional staff presented, as well as on some occasions developed their own was a major force in establishing Region One as a good example of what community involvement can accomplish.

4. What Were the Councils' Perceived Accomplishments

The preceding section of this chapter indicated that since decentralization, every school program, every major decision and every administrative change under region board authority, required lical school-community council approval. It was virtually impossible to separate the council influence from any of the accomplishments or failures in the schools.

The former region superintendent compiled the following outline of region level accomplishments implemented with council leadership:

1. . . . the movement which resulted in the elimination of the often offensive section of the Michigan Assessment Test of Basic Skills which asked fourth and seventh grade students about the socio-economic status of their families.

2. Personnel procedures developed with community input: . . . .

3. Budget practices . . . .

4. . . . planning and determining the Region's and each school's curriculum. . . .

5. Development of proposals that brought external funds for . . . exemplary Region One projects and programs: . . . .

6. Assistance in creating . . . new vocational curricula at Murray Wright High School which provided students with entry level skills into the world of work: . . . .

7. Participation in developing other curricular thrusts; . . . .

8. Health and community projects . . . .

School-community agents and assistants summarized the accomplishments in this manner:

1. Councils have been an excellent community education strategy, giving citizens and

staff experiences in developing and using democratic procedures for problem solving.

2. They have been an effective means of increasing citizen involvement and action, not only in school decision making, but in other aspects of community life important to education.

3. Through councils, new community leadership has been developed.

4. Through councils, a communication network with community opinion leaders has been established.

5. Councils have greatly increased the level of school accountability to the community.[1]

To arrive at perceptions of council accomplishments, the objectives of the councils approved by the Region Board in February, 1971, were used as a point of reference in the interviews. Perceptions of the interviewees are reported following each of the onjectives.

Objective #1: To provide vehicles by which the community can engage in democratic decision-making regarding the education of children and adults.

Councils have served as vehicles for community involvement in democratic decision-making. Every year beginning in 1973, councils produced evidence which satisfied the region board that they were functioning democratically. Councils were perceived by persons interviewed as having accomplished community participation in decision-making:

L. The councils provided a very legitimate, formal, structured model for community participation.

K. Mario Fantini identified three major pillars of the present educational system

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[1]Notes from a staff meeting of Region One School-Community Agents and Assistants held December 8, 1976.

which must be changed. One of these was governance, a shift from professional dominance to meaningful parental and community roles in the educational process, and I think Region One achieved that . . . . and in my experience, the community worked definitely within channels.

S. I think this objective has really been accomplished because the community has felt the council was the channel to use in resolving problems with the school. When I was chairperson at Pelham, parents would call me before they would call the principal. Parents have felt good about the council.

The 1976 annual report of the Region One Superintendent listed "Establishing an effective community council structure" as one of the most notable contributions made by the Region One Board.[1]

The "Position Statement on Decentralization" of the Region One Council Chairpersons' Organization includes this statement:

> In our region, we have developed a network of local councils and regional committees. This assures that our school principals, the regional and central boards are aware of community priorities.[2]

Objective #2: To build better relationships between the school and the community.

Councils have built better relationships between the school and community according to persons who participated in this study.

L. Relationships between school and community have improved. Unfortunately people often felt they needed to be hostile to make an impact. The councils provided a very positive way that eliminated the need for hostility. People who have come to a council meeting with a lot of hostility have made no impression because the council was accustomed to dealing with problems and had become

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[1] George Pierce, "Annual Report, 1975-76," p. 4.

[2] A copy of the position statement is in Appendix M.

more sophisticated than that. People have said councils attracted rabble rousers and shouters. That may have been true in the very beginning, but the formal group has proved to be a way to avoid that. People are now required by councils to become involved in postive ways. The councils brought people into the schools and they felt an identification with the schools.

O. Through their experiences in the councils, parents have realized that teaching is a joint venture with students and parents.

Staff community relations have been good. I can think of about two instances in about ten years where community people were down on specific teachers. The teachers are no longer here. The staff and I have frequently visited homes.

J. This community has consistently supported millage, and many of our "parents" are people who don't even have children. They have sensed the school as a place they could go which would support them. They have asked what they can do to help.

S. Councils have made parents feel better about the schools. I know this is true in my community. Once parents only came in the school when they were invited in about a problem, or they would come in once a month for a meeting, but now they come in any time. The council brought the parents into the building.

The council has also built better relationships between the teachers and parents. Our council adopted a policy that if parents did not come to the teacher, the teacher would go to them. Once or twice each year everyone of our parents has come to the school, and that is an accomplishment. We have documented parental visits.

T. One of the biggest accomplishments has been the ease with which the community has obtained information about school affairs through the councils.

Objective #3: To help the school fulfill its role as a true public service institution of the community, particularly in its relationship to community development.

Comments from the persons interviewed indicated councils have involved schools in the resolution of a variety of community problems. Schools were often the most available agency, and councils had developed community confidence that schools would react to community requests in helpful ways. The data suggested that schools and their councils needed to become more aware of other agencies to which the community could be referred for some kinds of assistance. Some of the comments follow:

L. The schools have traditionally felt that kids are what we are all about, and have not seen community development as one of their roles. The council however, had to deal with community problems. As a consequence, schools have been involved in broader community development efforts, not because the system wanted to, but because with councils they have not been able to avoid it.

T. Through the councils, we received information that caused us to become more policitally aware that things were going on all around us, and not just in the area of school affairs.

Councils also helped by making the school staff aware of the needs in the community. The staff not only learned more about community problems, they have helped solve them.

U. In this neighborhood I would have to say the school is the only thing we have. People come to the agent and assistant for everything. If they need a house, or a doctor, they come to us for assistance. Councils have increased requests for assistance. Sometimes I get upset about this. Schools cannot do it all.

F. I think this objective has been reached in some schools better than in others. Schools cannot be everything to everybody. More recently schools have been doing a much better job of referring the community to appropriate sources.

J. At one time the school and community were almost indistinguishable. We had more resources then because there were so many projects going on at that time. We were planning renewal projects, playground development, a community park and new housing. Only the park and part of the housing has materialized. This school has been part of the total community.

Objective #4: To carry on a continuing evaluation of the educational process.

The interviewees believed councils had carried on a continuing evaluation of the educational process. As a result, the community acquired knowledge of educational programs and processes. Respect for the school's role increased, and changes were made which reflected community values:

L. Councils engaged in evaluation by their nature. Information is power. The principals were required to give the councils information about the school. Just the fact that this was required was an accountability mechanism and made the councils power groups.

U. The councils have worked toward this objective. They were always interested in test scores and what programs were being taught. Members were learning all the time about new programs by going to workshops.

Councils were able to alert the community to problems that were going to develop like teacher cutbacks and buildings being closed. I am sure one of the reasons why millage passed was that we were a lot of people working together, who knew why the millage was needed.

J. I do not think there would have been such an awareness of testing and academic achievement if parents had not been involved. Schools did about two years of preparing for decentralization. We started releasing test scores. We started doing a lot of cleaning house in the school system in preparation for decentralization. If parents had not been defined a role, I don't think the schools would have done as much. They were forced into

making changes and bringing out the reality of the non-functioning book skills of our kids. Councils have been catalytic, and I think even if the concept of decentralization is modified, they won't take a back seat anymore.

O. In a sense I would say the councils helped the citizenry, parents and students, respect what the school was all about. They knew because they had been involved in it. They sat in the classrooms, planned the lessons, participated in the workshops and in whatever changes were necessary. We tried to work together at whatever had to be done to get change.

K. I think Region One through its council structure, and through the community relations office, was active in bringing new insights to lay people, to black people, so that they began making intelligent decisions with the resources available to them. There were instances in which certain professional staff members disagreed with the way they chose to use their resources. I am thinking about Title One. In times when funds were being cut, the community chose to maintain personnel, as opposed to maintaining programs, and who is to say which of the two choices was the better one, for the choice to retain paraprofessionals was made from a knowledge base as well as a completely emotional base.

Objective #5: To provide a direct linkage between the local school community and the regional boards. To serve as a resource of intimate knowledge of local school situations for the Regional Board.

The councils became very strong links between the school communities and the region board. That is, councils kept the board informed about school problems and perceived the region board and staff as having been able to get things done:

V. I think the thing we have done best has been letting the region board know what our needs are. Councils have had representatives at all meetings, and have been very vocal. It cut down on a let of screaming and hollering that would have gone on at Central Board because we could go to the region and get cooperation.

There were a lot of little problems which suddenly were resolved when we started talking about them at the region. For example, we started invesitgating the needs of the music teachers for instruments. Teachers had been told there was no money for repairs. I asked in a regional meeting and as a result they were scheduled for repair. When we started complaining in the meetings about the need for special education testing, it resulted in a decision to have staff stay on in the summer to test the hundred children on the waiting list. In my experience, whenever a problem was brought to the attention of the whole group at the region, something was done about it.

L. The councils served this purpose primarily through vehicles set up by the regional school-community relations office such as the regional committees and the conventions. People felt they could go right to the region office, or they could pick up a phone and call the region superintendent.

W. We accomplished this objective. In a humorous sense, I sometines think we have created a monster we cannot control. I don't know whether credit was due to the folk at the region or those in the community, but I think this has been one of our very effective areas.

Other accomplishments were also listed in three additional areas: political action, community cohesiveness and personal development of council members.

Political Action

Councils learned to function politically.

P. Councils need to become even more active politically. Many accomplishments can be enumerated:

-The Spain School-Community Council was able to influence a federal judge to remove Spain from the list of schools ordered closed.
-The Dwyer School-Community Council achieved an agreement with the mayor which made it possible to keep the Dwyer building in use.
-We have proof that more people registered and were voting.
-The councils were influential in getting approval of school millages.

-The decentralization struggle was also an example of council effectiveness. This was really an instance of a few people mounting a well organized attack on a political problem.

L. There is a bill right now before the state to eliminate region boards and decentralization. People looked at Region One and said, "Well, okay, maybe in Region One, this phenomenon called decentralization works, but we still ought to eliminate it." That did not happen because of school-community councils and their thrust to keep it from happening. Councils were viable political forces.

Community Cohesiveness

Councils were credited with helping to unite the community.

O. They always said the city was united. We were united in a sense, but in this community we had dividers such as the expressway, the tall public project buildings and the low buildings. Groups which were semi-united all functioned independently. But they all came together in the councils.

K. There were gains even when the region board and staff were not able to bring about particular changes desired by councils. Their efforts showed that there was a unified leadership thrust within the Region One community, and a black community, to gain through legitimate means, those goals they thought most appropriate for their schools.

G. With the whole busing situation, for instance, I think what helped was that we had already been meeting together as people, not black or white, but just as people concerned. We had some problems of course with some people who had not been involved at all. They suddenly popped up at the school and were against the changes, but those of us who had been involved and knew what was going on, worked together without the feelings.

J. In this region there has developed a sense of cause, a sense of unity, a sense of identification, that "we belong." Council members have not limited their support to their own neighborhoods, but have rallied to the

support of any cause in the region.

Personal Growth of Council Members

There were comments about ways citizens had benefitted personally from the councils.

C. Councils made parents feel they could be vocal. We had people speaking up who had never done this before.

J. I saw parents change from very passive, "yessing," agreeing people, to people who were contributing to and actually being antagonistic to things that were happening.

G. I credit the councils with giving me the courage to go back to school. I took the G.E.D., and began attending classes at Wayne County Community College with the goal of becoming an occupational therapist. The councils brought us up gradually and helped us have more confidence. I think that was a good thing because once we developed confidence, we were able to do the things we should have been doing all along.

O. I think councils brought out leadership talents in people who probably didn't know they had them and were very reluctant to speak out. I saw people develop in the councils to the point where they effectively participated in other groups once their youngsters left this school.

Region One's councils established a model for school-community organizations that had viability in other situations. One of the persons interviewed made these comments:

A. I think the fact the Judge DeMascio in his desegregation order, found it necessary to provide for certain kinds of school-community councils, is sufficient proof of the viability and political necessity for the kind of school-community council we have had developed since the sixties. The kind of school-community councils in Region One did not even exist before the sixties. The fact that they were developed out of that

> experience and that later a federal judge required the organization of such councils is evidence enough of the rightness and soundness of the actions taken by parents and community organizations with some school people in Region One to get the councils started.

The guidelines for the school-community relations committees ordered by Judge DeMascio[1] were so similar to the way Region One's councils were organized that very few modifications were necessary to bring the councils into compliance. The citywide council charged with overseeing the organization and functioninf of the local committees made use of several of the procedures tested in Region One, particularly the certification procedures.[2]

A resource notebook prepared for the training of community boards in the Ravenswood school district in Palo Alto, California contains a section entitled "Organizing for Community Boards." All of the documents in this section are guidelines and procedures developed in Region One. Representatives from that community have visited Region One's councils and region one staff has assisted in the training of the Ravenswood community board members.

5. What Kinds of Problems Did Councils Deal With Effectively?

In general, councils have followed the region board's organizational pattern of functioning with five standing

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[1] A copy of the school-community relations section of the court order is in Appendix N.

[2] A copy of the certification procedures for the court ordered committees can be found in Appendix O.

committees. These committees areas were used as the framework for reporting the data in his section. The official council functions[1] which relate to each committee are listed at the beginning of the discussion of each of the committee areas. The committees are Budget and Finance, Buildings and Sites, Curriculum, Personnel and School-Community Relations. A number of the councils had political action committees and data relating to that area were reported.

Budget and Finance

Function: To participate in committees established to influence the expenditure of funds under local school control, and to interpret local financial need to the Region Board.

Councils have been most effective in developing community understanding of school finances. Because central board controls and limited general fund budgets, opportunities to participate in budget decisions and policies were limited. Councils, however, have had more influence on special project budgets.

Participants in this study contributed the following insights:

> P. In the area of budget and finance, councils became well informed. The budget office has done a good job of instructing the community about budget matters. We have experienced some difficulty in efforts to influence policies in this area because of central board control.
>
> L. With Board Member Howard Williams pushing, there has been council participation in financial decisions, but the system has tried to curcumvent this; at least that has been the

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[1] See Appendix A.

experience of our council. Finance is such a major area that as citizens were helped to understand it, they also understood a lot about the total system. I understand that one council actually changed the school's budget, it changed the curriculum, consequently changing the budget. So it appears those who zeroed in had impact. In my experience, however, the finance area has not been developed as well as others in any of the councils.

W. I do not think councils have been too involved in budget and finance matters. They should have been because this involvement made people aware of where the money was really coming from and what it had to be spent on. There was, however, only so much money, and councils didn't have any choices regarding its use.

O. Probably the first area our council became active in was finance because during those first days the model neighborhood program also came into the schools. Under it, councils could hire personnel and use model neighborhoods funds for various things. Consequently, the council was very active in this area. Our council members have always been knowledgeable about the budget. The most active person has been the Title One chairman, who could tell you what the budget was and pull it out and show you exactly to the penny where the money was to be spent. We would take the regular school budget to the council meeting and show how much the school received, and why cuts were made. I believe if we had not had a council we might have had problems when cuts were made in staff as a result of the loss of students. The council was very understanding and helped decide which cuts were to be made. One decision they helped make was the change to a self contained organizational plan.

V. Councils contributed to more community understanding of the school financial situation. At one time we thought all school funds came from downtown, but we learned through the councils that there was a general fund as well as special project funds. We learned what could and could not be done with federal funds.

Buildings and Sites

Function: To assure as far as possible that the physical plant, equipment, etc. adequately meet educa-

tional needs.

The councils dealt effectively with many problems relating to school buildings and sites. These included school completions, school closings, physical improvements, vandalism, theft, and decisions regarding major contruction projects in the school community.

Councils also pursued with some success the goal of equal opportunity for minority contractors. They related effectively to many problems regarding buildings and sites despite the fact that school housing was a central board responsibility and despite differences of opinion about the wisdom of some council decisions.

Persons interviewed made the following observations:

K. The councils in conjunction with the region board, were able to make some major decisions. I would say, however, only time will tell whether or not they were good ones. I am thinking particularly about the decision to limit the Northern High School site to the present property. The verdict is not in yet on whether or not it was advisable to have a high school site limited to such small acreage.

Region One took some landmark strides in insisting that minority contractors be hired, and professional staff supported the community. Region One asked very simply, "If black people in a black region do not give black contractors an opportunity, who will?" and the councils supported the board's position.

P. Housing is a central board responsibility and our councils have not been able to do much in the acutal area of policy decisions.

O. Our custodian has been very active in buildings and sites. He attended the region board's buildings and sites committee meetings and reported to the council monthly. Consequently, in front of our building you see the

Detroit sewer interceptor system which has been in progress for about four and one-half years. Before, they dug the first hole, however, the council came in, asked questions about how safe it would be, and decided to invite the city authorities to explain what was involved and extracted a promise that when the project started there would be twenty-four hour guards so so one would walk into it.

As for the school, the council wanted parking lights out back and got them. We have always had excellent cooperation whenever the council has written a letter about various needs.

Couzens also has had one of the lowest records of vandalism. The school is in an area where one of the most militant groups surfaced, yet we did not have a problem. I think this was because the council helped community people internalize the fact that this was their school.

C. We had three hundred and eighty dollars in windows broken in one year, either 1968 or 1969. In 1971, we didn't have any. People were told their taxes were paying for the windows. When they became aware of that, we no longer had a problem.

Councils were able to keep some buildings scheduled to be closed, open. If some verbal community perosns had not been active in these situations, the buildings would have been closed. Because of council pressure, some buildings were completed, such as Pelham Middle School and Murray Wright High School. Some buildings were closed and councils did a good job with that. Most people clamored to have buildings stay open, but some community people got together in the councils and said they felt there were buildings that should be closed.

Councils also helped with building upkeep problems, like getting buildings painted. We were able to help because we knew where to go to get action.

G. Councils were effective in meeting the problem of community resistance to school closings. They knew there was a need for schools to be closed, and they worked together so there wasn't a big turmoil in communities when buildings had to be closed as there was when

a portion of Franklin's building was torn down a few years ago. I can remember how unhappy we were about that. I think if we had been involved before that happened we would have realized how silly it was to act as we did.

I also recall a case when some instruments were stolen from Pelham. The council saw that the community was made aware of it and the instruments were brought back.

Curriculum

Functions: -To study the local school curriculum (day and evening) and to work for the changes necessary.

-To define the educational needs of the local school community.

-To assure that teaching materials and resources are consistent with school and community needs.

The most noteworthy achievement in the curriculum area was the improvement of student achievement as measured by standardized tests. Councils also identified needs and suggested the development and implementation of other programs.

Concern about student achievement was a motivating force in the organization of councils in the sixties. In the spring of 1972, the region experienced a serious crisis when the region board endeavored to have the region superintendent evaluate all principals as unsatisfactory because of low achievement scores. By the fall of 1972, the tide had begun turning, and the Board called a press conference to announce, ". . . students within the region have stopped their decline in learning as measures on standardized tests."[1] Among the factors credited with this improve-

[1]"Testing Improvement." Memorandum to Representatives of the press, from Region One Board and Staff, November 14, 1972, p. 1.

ment were school-community council activities. According to the press release, "Change has not only occurred in the home, but also in the schools.[1] This change was attributed to the councils. The most recently disseminated data indicated significant improvement in achievement scores in reading and mathemetics at the elementary level. The scores compared favorably with citywide norms and in many cases met with or exceeded national norms.[2] Improvements were beginning to show at the middle school level and it was anticipated that achievements at the elementary and middle school levels would eventually reach the high schools.

Councils identified needs, suggested, and supported the development and implementation of programs. Some of these experiences were recalled by the interviewees in the following comments:

> P. Curriculum is probably the area with which we have had most success, possibly because that is the area the Region Board has had most control over.
>
> K. I recall during the teacher strike the councils were very supportive of the efforts of the region staff to get homework to students, particularly to seniors. There was great support for the development of the Region One minimum standards, which at the time, were frowned on by other regions in the city. It is interesting that we hve come full cycle and now almost every region is setting basic standards. I believe our emphasis on preparedness for test taking throughout the region, the thrust toward developing a better system of reporting to parents, all of these are indications of constructive things that were done.
>
> Parents came in and saw what was going on in the classroom. They had a part in deter-

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[1] Ibid., p. 2.

[2] A copy of this report can be found in Appendix Q.

mining what curriculum we used. They helped select some of the materials. They helped select personnel.

C. I have not been so happy about the way councils have been involved in the academic or curricular areas. I know they have been involved, but I don't feel parents have been involved enough in the selection of classroom materials such as textbooks. This area has been left too much to teachers and administrators without consultation with the community.

Personnel

Function: To participate in the interviewing, selection and termination of local school personnel.

Councils participated in staff selection and evaluation within contractual restraints. Many contractual restraints however, could not be overcome despite the Region Board's pursuit of some cases all the way to the courts. Council members, however, became skilled in selecting staff whose goals were compatible with those of the community. The persons interviewed contributed the following data on the effectiveness of councils in personnel problems:

C. Councils dealt effectively with personnel problems. Before decentralization, if there was a staff person whom you knew was not doing anything, there was nothing you could do about it. Through the councils we have called attention to staff who needed to be dealt with and have been able to get situations corrected. The council helped the personnel department remove ineffective staff. If that department's hands were tied, we drew enough attention to the situation to get someone else to take action. Councils used their influence to keep personnel who would automatically have been released, return. Unions interfered in our ability to solve personnel problems because unions stressed seniority, and when you had seniority, that seemed to be more important than skills.

K. Given their preference, many Region One councils would have ignored eligibility lists, the need for racial balance, and would perhaps even have ignored the need for certification requirements as they were constituted. The councils were held in check by the parameters of the law.

Councils got the Region Board to pursue a number of cases. Several major ones had to do with balance of staff. There had been several instances in which a local council had been opposed to the Central Board mandate that administration and faculty in a building be balanced racially. Problems arose when there were two black administrators and one left, which normally required a white replacement for balance of staff. Region One in many instances pushed for black replacements as a true representation of the community and the fact that students needed black role models. At least one case was taken to court. . . .

The evaluation of administrators in Region One is perhaps the classical example of dealing very effectively with a personnel problem. I often thought the expression "taking a lemon" and making lemonade out of it could apply to that particular situation. The board, with perhaps some less than completely sound motivation, wanting perhaps to spank some of the administrators on the wrist, legitimately concerned about test scores, mandated that all administrators be marked unsatisfactory. Realizing this was impossible, could literally tear the region apart, and be used as evidence that "these people" could not run things, the professional staff was able to work with the community and the region board, to develop an evaluative system. The system developed had merit for all concerned, and served the additional purpose of helping to clarify the kind of leadership necessary for Region One administrators.

U. When schools had to reduce teaching staff, the council's personnel committee sat down

School-Community Relations

Functions: To assure that the special needs of pupils and the community are being serviced.
To act as mediator in the resolution of local school-community conflict.

Problems identified by the persons interviewed with which councils experienced success involved 1) community-staff relationships, 2) community conflicts and selfish interests, 3) amount of community participation, 4) ability of councils to withstand pressures, 5) council power, and 6) the council organization.

Council-Staff Relationships

There were problems involving relationships of principals, teachers, and paraprofessionals with the councils. When interviewed, the present region superintendent made this comment:

> P. I think one of the problems that councils faced and dealt with effectively was that of working with staff, that is, getting staff and community to work together. Councils have been effective in understanding the problems staff face and this has been very helpful. The best ally an effective administrator can have is a good council. This was one of the areas that could have created serious problems had it not been handled effectively.

A potential problem area was the possibility of administrative compliance with poor educational decisions made by the council. The approved council functions included this policy:

and discussed which teachers should be kept when it wasn't a case of seniority. It really involved curriculum as well.

J. When I started with the Wayne project, the council had a role in staff selection. Parents sat in on interviews and also participated in them. People at the university resented being interviewed by parents. As a consequence, we weren't always able to get the people over here because of resentment of that step. We were even told by one Central Board staff member that it was demeaning to be interviewed by parents. Things have changed since then.

The council has been astute in what to look for in people. It has matured beyond the point of just looking for blackness in a person, even though I am not playing that down. Parents learned to inquire about skills, to find out what the person could bring to the job, and to listen for what was not being said. This maturity came from being involved in the process.

I would not deny that there has been some favoritism, especially in hiring aides. I can say, however, that using parents to screen aides in the school yielded some terrific people. I think there were certain things parents who interviewed looked for, and they made their judgments on this basis.

O. When the personnel committee first became active, it had great input in hiring new personnel. Our decreasing enrollment has, however, resulted in releasing rather than hiring staff. The personnel committee developed to the point where we were sent a new teacher and the community members observed the teacher and advised him that he had to change or go. Eventually the person left. If a staff member was not putting in the required amount of time or was not performing well, the council did not hesitate to come to me and say, "We will back you. Send that person packing. If we are going to have someone paid to work here, then let's have responsible people." Over the years they worked constructively to get improvement in staff in areas of weakness they identified.

> In cases of conflict between the local school principal and the school-community council and an impasse is reached, the regional board shall render a decision.[1]

Councils, however, participated in the evaluation of principals, a situation which imposed some very practical pressures.

Illustrations of ways in which this problem was dealt with were reported in the following comments:

> J. I have not had voting rights in my council. I have, however, been a part of every meeting as I was always asked to give reports. When there was an issue, I asked the council to give me its reaction. When the council raised issues and came to me, I served as a resource but insisted that the council arrive at its own position. I was asked by a representative from the State Department had I always agreed with what the council decided. I have not always agreed. We have some things going on here now that I don't agree with, but they are not damaging to the children. They are supporting their children in a way. An example is that our council wanted a formal graduation for the fifth grade with caps and gowns. I do not approve of this for the fifth grade. Since it would be a very elaborate program, I had to tell the council that neither I nor the teachers would have the time to devote to that type program. They decided to do it all themselves, and they did. They planned the program, got the lunch together and took care of all details. I was not in agreement, but when the mechanism started working, I supported it. So they ordered the caps and gowns, got the program together, and made all arrangements. I helped cook the lunch. They have done this now for about five years. It is a tradition. Each year,

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[1]See the Objectives and Functions of Councils in Appendix A.

however, I have had them take it back to the parents to vote on because it has also been expensive. I have drawn the line if I believed the instructional program was going to be damaged.

T. I would be unjust if I said a full yes or no regarding whether administrators have gone along with council decisions they believed wrong. There were programs I feel councils wanted to provide with federal funds, and even though administration felt they were not the best use of the funds, they agreed to them. Councils have learned how to apply pressure and if a council wanted a program and would go all out to get it, some administrators would not fight the decision. Some decisions were between a program such as the reading coordinator which serviced the entire school, and a class which serviced a small number of students but employed several teacher aides. This was difficult because a number of the teacher aides did not have any other income. The only way the administrator could get the reading coordinator program was to keep people informed and involved. This involvement enabled them to see where the greatest benefit would come from for the students. The limit placed on the number of employees on councils helped eliminate this problem. You cannot expect people to vote their jobs away.

The quantity and quality of teacher involvement in the councils has been an issue since the beginning of the public organizational meetings. The region board refused to grant a request that teachers be denied the privilege of voting in these meetings.[1] The Detroit Federation of Teachers (D.F.T.) issued the following policy statement:

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[1]At the April 29, 1971 meeting of the Region Board, the following motion was made: "At the community councils' organization meetings, the parents will be the ones who vote on who will be represented on the councils, that the

> The Union Building Representative will represent the teaching staff on any Detroit local School Community Council and/or Advisory Council.
>
> If the Building Representative is unable to serve on such councils, he shall designate a representative who is approved by the School Union Committee.
>
> All teacher members of such councils MUST be Union members elected by their peers.[1]

The council project coordinators reported the following data concerning teacher participation in Region One's councils in December, 1971:

1. Teachers are voting members on all (41) councils.
2. The D.F.T. Building Representative is a voting member on at least 29 councils.
3. The average number of teachers per council is about 5.
4. Teachers selected their own representatives on 28 councils.
5. Teachers hold offices on at least 19 councils.
6. Teachers serve as committee chairmen on at least 21 councils.
7. Teachers serve on council committees, as members and/or chairmen of at least 30 councils.[2]

A 1976 report showed that an average of three teachers were present at most council meetings, and that teachers

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parents will vote and decide how many teachers will be on the councils and whether teachers can vote." The motion failed.

[1]"Detroit Federation of Teachers Policy Re: Teacher Representation on Local School Advisory and/or Community Councils." Adopted by DFT Executive Board, November 18, 1971. (Printed circular)

[2]Eleanor I. Barnwell, "Teacher Participation on Region I School-Community Councils December 1971." A report. Detroit, Michigan, January 4, 1972 (Duplicated).

had attended 66% of all council meetings held during the 1975-76 school year.[1] A report of council leadership indicated that twelve percent of all of the persons who held offices and served as chairpersons of committees were teachers.[2]

Following are comments of the interviewees regarding teacher participation on the councils:

G. Teacher participation in the council has been dependent on the time of day. There has been good participation in meetings held right after school, but not at those held later in the day. The teacher representatives have communicated what has occurred in the meetings to the other teachers, sometimes not exactly the way it was supposed to be communicated, but the word has gone back.

L. Teachers have not been involved enough. They have usually only gotten involved when they have had a personal or group need. They have remained somewhat negative about the councils. We developed a real close family at Knudsen so the lingering negativism has been hard to understand.

Teachers usually came to the council with complaints about administration. The complaints generally were not handled because teachers did not want to go through the steps required to resolve complaints of that nature. There were occasions, such as when the Title One staff needed to impress the council, or when new programs were to be introduced, when they came to the meetings in order to be able to report they had involved the community. Then in many cases, they never paid attention to

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[1]See Appendix D.

[2]See Appendix E.

the council again. They have, however, felt it important to get the council's approval of any plans.

Paraprofessionals have worn two hats. They are residents and frequently parents of the school community, as well as being members of the school staff. Many were P.T.A. leaders as well as leaders of the early councils. They have been a source of strength to the councils, but there have also been problems as indicated by this comment:

> S. It has not been a good practice to have paraprofessionals in decision-making roles in the schools they work for because they could not be objective. Also, in my experience we could not get over half of the paraprofessionals to even come to a council meeting. We had a very negative feeling about the paraprofessionals in the school that I worked with because they would not stay for the meetings. What happened sometimes was that the paraprofessionals forgot they were community people.

Other councils have had a different experience. There has been evidence that paraprofessionals have dominated some council meetings. They have known when the decisions affecting them were going to be made and have been attending meetings selectively. To counteract this, a community task force with paraprofessional membership recommended the adoption of a regional policy requiring councils to draw 75% of their memberships from the community. Anyone employed at the council's school was classified as staff. Both councils and region board approved this policy.[1]

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[1]See Appendix F.

Community Conflicts and
Selfish Interests

The councils have had to contend with the influence of community conflicts and selfish interests in council decisions. The interviewees commented as follows:

P. The politics of councils and their political skills can be improved. Some councils tended to have cliques which made it difficult to broaden the base of involvement.

M. There is no question that there have been community people who demanded certain resolutions from the school district that were not particularly healthy and who used the vehicle of community participation in the schools for personal purposes. I believe that is quite normal. In any large community where many, many people are participating, some of them will not be bona fide participants. Those people, however, are the ones who sometimes defeated the albeit reluctant but anxious educator who really wanted legitimate participation. Those kinds of educators were often frightened by the highly articulate self seeking community person, and were dubious about what he or she was to do about interacting with them. I think a good school-community council would probably oust from its own body those influences they found detrimental to their major purpose which is educational achievement for the kids.

J. Once there was a private matter taking place in the community that was interfering because it kept tension among the people in the school. I stayed out of it because I was getting signals that said this was between them and had to be settled that way. Because I had that period of tension, I would not say,"throw out the councils!" It was a trying time, and I went to resources to help resolve it, but I also backed away to give them room to work it out.

Councils frequently provided mechanisms in which a variety of community interests met and worked productively and cooperatively. The report of one of the interviewees supported this statement:

> O. We considered the total council a school-community relations council. Our student council reported regularly to the council. The parapros were represented on the council. We cooperated with all of the groups, senior citizens, etc. and they all had representation on the council. For some reason, all of these groups meshed here at school even though they did not mesh outside.

One of the conclusions from an evaluation regarding seventeen Region One councils involved in the model neighborhood educational program was relevant to this discussion:

> There is sufficient evidence. . .to indicate that some of the public schools' most vociferous critics will in time become supporters, if they are included in the decision-making process. Every effort should be made to capitalize on this finding where feasible.[1]

Community Participation

Concern was expressed about the amount of community participation. Some of the interviewees made the following observations:

> P. Another problem is that of getting a broad base of community representation on councils. We are improving, but I think we can do a better job of involving people who do not have children in the schools. We also need more young parents.

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[1]William H. Thomas, "An Evaluation of the ED-020 Local Schools Community Councils Project, 1971-1972." Research and Development Department. Detroit Public Schools, May 1973 (Mimeographed), p. 36.

G. One reason more parents do not participate is because their children have already passed them educationally. The parents feel very insecure, and don't want to go to school and meet all of the people with degrees. They just cannot face going to the school. I know myself, when my children were young, I dreaded going to the school because I had quit when I was in the eighth grade, and I felt insecure about talking with people with education. In fact, sometimes I had nightmares about going to school. That is why most parents do not even go to conferences with teachers, let alone becoming involved in a council. They don't feel they can handle it.

C. The councils have dealt effectively with the problem of getting other parents involved. Without the council we would not have had nearly as many people.

The records show that the level of council participation remained fairly constant.[1] In 1977, the region superintendent organized a task force on councils which developed recommendations relating to council participation. An accountability system was also developed.[2] At region board meetings, attendance usually ranged from 150 to 200 persons. The majority of the participants were council members.

J. Community meetings are well attended. You know I have seen rain and snow storms and the people were there. I went to one at Northeastern High School a couple of years ago where the ice was so bad I skidded all

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[1]See "Local Council Participation Facts and Figures" in Appendix D.

[2]This system which involved minimum standards for councils is a part of "The Report from the Task Force on Councils" which is in Appendix F.

the way down, and I think there must have been hundreds of people there.

L. A problem was that in three years time you could turn over your whole parents group. The continuity had to be provided by the staff. It was important to keep some of your old members even if they did not have kids at the school.

The Ability of Councils to Withstand Pressure

Councils provided a structure for community input that was effective in crisis situations. The comments which follow provide related data:

S. Councils have been effective in assuring that a school-community structure was in place when a problem came up. There was one time when some parents from our community picketed the Central Board when the busing started. They were new parents who hadn't been involved and didn't know where to go. Suddenly they turned up and started raising holy heck. The council tried to help them use the right procedures and showed them where to go. We helped them set up a meeting with the region board and even went with them. Actually I felt we handled it quite well. The parents were more willing to listen to us because we were community persons just as they were, even though we were saying the same things the authorities were saying.

R. The community has thought the council had the last word. They thought if the council made a decision, they had to accept it. They didn't seem to realize they could appeal it.

Council Power

The question of council power, rights and responsibilities, has been troublesome. Councils resented being bypassed.

This had occurred, usually because of conflicting Board of Education policies. A case in point would be when certain administrators had to be assigned to different schools. One of the interviewees had this experience:

> J. Last year, a person was placed here by the region, and the council was not involved. I suffered all year with that, even though I tried to explain why this hd happened. The displeasure was not really with the person, although it appeared to be. The council was displeased with the process used, which had not included members in the selection procedure. When a role like that was once given to a council, it had to be continued.

Administrative deadlines sometimes caused problems, as happened in the following report:

> L. The chairperson did not see the budget. After it was due, I went to the region's budget officer and found that the budget had been submitted without the chairperson's signature as was the region's policy. The explanation given was that there was a deadline. The council had not taken the initiative to do anything about it and the principal apparently had not had time to get the budget to the council or the chairperson. Where did this leave the council's finance committee? Where did it leave the council?

The level of effectiveness in resolving problems of this kind varied among the councils. In some instances councils elected to leave such decisions to their administrators. These were, however, opportunities for community education which, if not used, were lost, and which could have long range negative results in terms of building community understanding and support. The following comment is perhaps an accurate summary:

G. I think a problem was that most people did not realize how strong the councils could be if they just used the power they had, because we really did have power. Whenever a problem was brought up to the whole group and we started dealing with it, we seemed to be able to settle it. We seemed to be able to do something about it.

The Council Organization

The councils of the seventies experienced growing pains. Some of the major problems accompanying their development will be briefly discussed. They include 1) council elections, 2) roles of chairpersons, 3) relationships of other school committees to the councils, and 4) organizational patterns.

1) Council elections were a source of staff and community concern. Some elections were not being held as stipulated in council by-laws. Elections were challenged because of inadequate planning and publicity and sometimes because of the way they were conducted. Occasionally these problems required the assistance of an objective mediator to resolve them. The persons who had served as conveners for council organizational meetings were often called into service. These problems and some of the others discussed in this section, were resolved through the use of a set of procedures entitled, "Policies Relating to School-Community Councils."[1]

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[1]A copy of the policies is in Appendix G.

These policies were developed by the school-community relations office from practices followed by councils which were functioning smoothly. The policies were endorsed by councils and approved by the region board. The policies required the filing of by-laws in the region office to be used as a frame of reference for resolving disputes. Councils were required to hold public elections at least biennially. It was further stipulated that all council election planning and implementation be approved by the regional school-community relations office. The practice of having an official observer present at elections was also adopted. The new policies effectively prevented and resolved problems relating to elections.

2) Another major problem was related to positions taken by council chairpersons without the knowledge of their councils. Frequently the need for quick decisions at the regional level created situations which did not allow sufficient time for councils to meet and take positions. Consequently, the responses to these requests reflected only the chairpersons' opinions. Many of the chairpersons joined with their councils in objecting to this practice. There were other chairpersons who felt they had the right to function in this way and whose councils sought remedies for this behavior.

The region board and staff were encouraged to differentiate between council opinion and the opinion of chairpersons. Included in the new policies were requirements

that all council official positions and requests be submitted in writing with proper documentation that the action under consideration transpired at an official council meeting. Procedures to be followed when a quorum was not present at a meeting were included. Councils were encouraged to think ahead and develop general priorities and policies to guide chairpersons in emergency situations.

3) The relationship between community councils and committees decreed by governmental projects with independent guidelines, caused problems to surface periodically. The position generally taken by the region board was that all such bodies must maintain communication with the council. Additionally, the council was to be involved in organizing and naming citizens for membership in these committees where appropriate. These problems have diminished somewhat as the committees and councils found more advantages in working together than in engaging in power struggles.

4) Nearly one-half of the communities rejected the suggested "elected membership" council model, possibly because residents of the Region One community felt they had historically been excluded from meaningful decision-making opportunities in schools. Hence, they were very reluctant to say to any person in attendance at a meeting, "You cannot vote." The designers of the elected membership council model sought to expand and make more representative

the five or six member executive boards of traditional school organizations. The intent was to have the council serve as an executive board for the total community which would hold occasional mass meetings to hear reports and make suggestions. It was also felt that this structure could provide excellent training in representative government. In practice, everyone present at the meetings was permitted to vote unless the matter under consideration was very sensitive or critical, or when there appeared to be obvious differences of opinion among those present. In these instances, a separate vote of the elected members was usually taken.

The provisions of the court order under which Region One's councils began functioning in 1977-78, require an identified membership. Some of the councils with open and modified elected memberships have had to redesign their structures. This restructuring has resulted in the expansion of the executive committee to meet the court requirements, and submitting that body as the official council. The restructuring remains compatible with the original elected membership concept.

Political Action

To develop concerted community action on a specific school-community problem.

A number of the councils have functioned with political action committees. The interviewees commented on the effective political roles councils have played in millage campaigns, retaining decentralization, changing the State of Michigan achievement test instrument, voter registration and education:

G. Councils have been very active politically, especially in millage efforts. They have gotten people out to vote, have increased community awareness that more people need to be involved and have influenced more people to file as candidates.

O. Whenever the region has gone to the City Council or to Lansing, there has been someone from our council along. They have also gone independently. The council has taken positions on issues, but refused to endorse candidates.

P. The decentralization struggle was an example of effective political action involving our councils.

K. I think the region's very first political struggle had to do with Chapter III. It was probably in 1971 when Chapter III funds from the state were given on the basis of achievement but a corollary was that students had to answer some questions that councils complained to the region board about. The board perceived these questions as being demeaning, as delving into socio-economic backgrounds with questions that had very personal overtones. The Region One family took the position that it would not accept the funds if it meant children had to be subjected to that. After Region One was strong enough to do this in the face of great opposition at the central level, it was found out that there were other school systems throughout the state that also felt this but had not had the courage to be the first ones to take this position. The State Board of Education did back down on the requirement that the students fill out that questionnaire.

C. The councils have been politically effective in unifying a greater number of people. They have also communicated with a greater number of people. The councils have dealt effectively with specific problems such as the millage. I think the work of the councils on millage has been outstanding. I believe that without the councils millage would not have passed. One of our greatest accomplishments is what we did about decentralization. If it hadn't been for some verbal, knowledgeable council people, I believe the legislature would have eliminated decentralization long ago.

6. What specific Competencies Were Perceived By School Staff and Council Members as Being Important to the Role of a Council Member?

Data pertaining to this question were obtained from a variety of Region One Board of Education records as well as from the interviews. The first quotations from the interviews which appear below reflect the general approach to this question employed by all of the persons questioned:

D. I do not believe formal education enters into it. In my experience with community groups, I found if you give the community time and technical assistance, it will resolve its problems in ways beneficial to everyone concerned. I do not believe people ever wanted to"do in" education or the schools. I think all they ever wanted was a better opportunity.

J. I think parents have more skill than we sometimes want to give them credit for. They may not have the educational jargon that that goes with it, but they have skills and perceptions of the role of the school.

G. I do not think one has to be a particular person, or have any real skill other than caring. I think the essential element that makes a council work, is that its members care.

At the first council convention, participants identified a number of training needs, including 1) how to func-

tion as a chairperson, 2) how to plan, conduct and evaluate information in a personnel interview, 3) how to evaluate staff performance, 4) how to write behavioral objectives, 5) how to organize and evaluate programs, 6) understanding the grade structure and organization of a school, 7) identifying needs and making plans to meet them, 8) rumor control techniques, and 9) how to develop ongoing organizations.[1]

Council chairpersons at the same convention expressed a desire for training in the following areas:

a. How to help members stick to the subject.

b. How to capitalize on the interest of citizens which does exist.

c. How to get a council started. (Example, By-laws first or later?)

d. How to decide what to present to the public.

e. How to organize a good meeting.

f. Role of entertainment to get people out to meetings.[2]

During the 1971-72 school year, the Model Neighborhood Agency (MNA) made possible opportunities for councils in the involved communities to organize workshops around needs they identified. Among the workshops reported, were sessions organized to meet the following objectives which provide clues to competencies considered important:

-To secure complete community understanding and cooperation in determining priorities and needs for students.

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[1] Region One School-Community Council Convention Report, 1971, pp. 14-39.

[2] Ibid., p. 15

-To provide leadership training for community people.

-To conduct practical workshops which will help parents and community people work with the school staff.

-To train council members to identify problems, select best possible solutions, and to evaluate the results.

-To train council members to critically analyze the school philosophy, the school's operations, the school's bureaucracy, and the school's sources of funding.[1]

One council was reported as having held a two day convention to train participants in the nine council committee areas contained in the suggested guidelines for organizing councils.

Assistance in determining the answer to the question of needed competencies was also available in a listing of questions council chairpersons raised about their role in a regional workship conducted for them in 1977. Included in the list were questions about 1) the purpose, responsibilities and powers of councils, 2) how to increase community interest, 3) parliamentary procedures, 4) decision making techniques, 5) problem solving techniques and resources, 6) channels of appeal and 7) conflict of interest.[2]

Chairpersons also suggested and ranked a list of subjects to be considered at their monthly meetings which provide clues to their perceptions of needed competencies. In approximate rank order, the subjects were: 1) how to solve specific problems such as student safety and fighting, 2)

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[1]Thomas, pp. 5-31

[2]The workshop was conducted by the regional school-community relations staff.

how to work with and evaluate administrators, 3) information about federal and state funded projects, 4) how to obtain funds for council use, 5) how to develop a year's plan of work for a council, 6) how to increase parent participation in schools, 7) how councils can work together, 8) council relationships with the region staff, the regional and central boards of education, and 9) council organizational patterns and functions in Region One and other regions.[1]

The interviewees had perceptions about specific competencies they judged important. They began with personal traits and commitment:

> D. A high degree of interest in education, interest in the community and a desire to improve it, a degree of flexibility and a willingness to work are needed.
>
> R. I think council members should be tolerant, not only for their sakes but for the sakes of others. They need discreation. That is they should know where to speak. There are some places where certain things should not be discussed. They should be concerned about what they are about and this should not be limited to selfish concerns. They also need time to devote to the council.
>
> S. Council members realized that it is important to attend meetings, not only council meetings, so that they can get all the proper information.

It was felt that council members had a need to understand Region One's council philosophy, structure and processes in order to function in a group.

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[1]"Meeting Summary, Meeting of Council Chairpersons," Region One, Detroit Public Schools, December 9, 1978 (Mimeographed).

R. They need to become knowledgeable about what they are about. What is the council? What kind of power does it have? What is the organizational structure of the council? They need to know the power lines, the appeal process and levels, all the way to Washington. They need to be taught the importance of coming together, of working together and that in unity there is strength.

D. I would want council members to begin developing some kind of order, some structural system of their own organizations. I do not think it has to be parliamentary necessarily, but in some way of dealing with business within the confines of their role. There is a danger the members could be co-opted so I would always want to build into that structure some turnover so that the group is ongoing and viable.

S. Council members need to know how to get by-laws written. They need to know how to conduct a meeting and how to involve everyone present in contributing, because some people will never talk up. They also need to know how to control the people that need to be kept quiet because they never shut up. Those who have not been involved have tended to think all the "silly" rules we have functioned with were foolish until they came across a problem where something arose because they had not followed the procedures and found themselves in trouble. It is necessary to teach new people the importance of following proper procedures and processes.

L. Council members need to understand what the council's rights are and how to exercise them. They need to know they do have a right to ask principals what the school budgets are. They have a right to ask why the various curricula are being offered. They need to know what they can do if they do not like what they discover. They need to understand how meetings operate with formal leadership, such as how to make a motion, and how they operate more informally.

O. I found it important for members to know how to conduct and participate in meetings. We have found it works to hold fast to your starting time, to follow an agenda which everyone has, and to make use of committees

when controversial issues arise. We have also found it important to train committee chairpersons in the skill of making brief reports.

P. I believe council leadership should be trained to have more programs and to make the meetings more informal, where they do things without applying all of Robert's Rules of Order.

M. They have been and must continue to be aware of what the goals and objectives of both the schools and the region are and how to operate and make demands for quality education on those bases.

Communication skills were identified as needed:

D. I would like to have the members trained in communication skills so that they are able to relate to a variety of people within the system, e.g., the superintendent, the region board, the local authorities in the region office, teachers, children, as well as their peers. Among the communication skills that can be taught is how to listen.

T. Members need public speaking and how to express themselves.

L. They need training in how and when to listen and how to talk. They need to know when to ask a question. It is devastating when no one talks.

L. The competencies needed are how to listen, knowing when to ask a question, and having the nerve to ask it. They also need understanding of a number of areas such as finance, personnel, etc. That has come from participating.

V. Members need to be helped to understand the importance of feedback. Our council is made up of representatives of different organizations and groups. This is a good idea on paper, but it doesn't work if the people who are supposed to be taking the information back to the particular group isn't doing it. If the representatives get the information back it works well. This means that people also need training in how to select good representatives.

Problem solving competencies were discussed:

D. It is important for council members to internalize the problem solving process. That is simply the process of analyzing and coming up with a plan of action based upon a fairly good analysis. It sounds easy, but it isn't.

P. One important broad category under competencies is the intellectual process of solving problems. How do you select a problem? How do you analyze the problem and evaluate the various solutions?

J. I think there are three critical competencies: defining roles, problem solving behavior and decision-making.

An area of needed competence involved identifying and concentrating on issues and policies.

P. Another broad competency need is how to concentrate on skills and issues rather than personalities.

A. I always encouraged parents to try to work for policy decisions from the system rather than to engage their energies in pursuing each separate case or incident.

J. One thing that will make a council or region level activity survive is the ability to speak to issues. The focus must always be on the fact that schools are for kids. As long as that is done, other problems will gradually decrease.

Learning how to get adequate information was considered important:

V. It is important to learn how to get the right information from which ot make decisions. Council members need to know what they are talking about. They need an accurate information center, and the data they get must be up to date.

L. Council members need to know how to evaluate information. It is important that they ascertain if the information is accurate and complete.

Council members need to know how to use competently the policitical systems in which schools operate.

M. More and more community folks have excellent background information about what a school district, a large one particularly, is all about. I think they need those kinds of skills. They need to know their rights within the schools. They ought to and do know more and more about the rights of their children in terms of record keeping and total records of their children. They have access now to all knowledge about what happens to their child in the school. Those things speak to skill development on the part of the community.

They need to be familiar with all the federal apparatus, They not only should, but have become very familiar with the grant proposals and with the rights of community organizations within Title One.

D. The council members have had to deal with city government, with the regional structure, the central board, plus the local school. It is a heavy responsibility. They have needed to know what are appropriate resources, and what are appropriate problem solving channels. A training program could include a whole lecture or drilling on the system itself to build understanding of how it works, and how you make parts of it work.

W. I think we could be more effective if parents were aware of problems that permeate the entire system. I think we have been successful in getting parents to know what is happening in the region, but they look on Region One as being "the" system, and it isn't. For example, many felt that because the millage passed in Region One, their duty was over, but that was wrong. We need to let them know we have representatives in Lansing and Washington and they can pressure those people too. The average person has felt that it will not do any good, but it does.

P. Councils need to know how to use resources other than the schools. It would be silly for the school to try to solve a recreation problem when we have Parks and Recreation in the area and that is their problem. It is our responsibility to refer the community to these resources.

Council members need training in the various committee areas:

C. At first, people didn't understand about finance or the Title One programs. We kept telling them they had better be aware of what was going on and now they understand. I feel it can be the same way with any other council committee. It will take some time and the information must be made available.

O. When the school budget is published, we try to explain it to the council. Most of the members look at it hastily except the Title One and Finance Committee chairpersons, who look at it closely because they are supposed to be knowledgeable. They attend the regional meetings regularly and return to the school and ask questions.

D. Staff selection techniques have been developed, I imagine, by the personnel committees. I can remember that when we selected an assistant principal or somebody on the east side, the citizens had written up a set of guidelines by which they would judge candidates and it was fantastic.

Persons interviewed also identified competencies they felt were necessary for staff members, particularly principals and school-community agents who work with councils:

C. Principals need training in how to work with councils before and even since the councils were formed. I have felt there were principals who have not really known where they were going with the councils.

J. Staff needs to understand group process. The politicking people have attributed to some councils is normal group behavior. All groups politic and jockey for position. In any group there are people who are leaders and those who are doers. There are also dominating groups.

Instead of retracting from councils when members get aggressive, staff needs training in concentrating on roles.

L. It has been my experience that principals have not been trained to deal with the community. I have felt that if anything, they have been trained to help keep the community out of schools. This has seemed to be the national model.

D. Staff must be taught to understand and not internalize conflict. Professionals must also learn to accept the consequences of the process and not be too influenced by their own values. I often had to remind agents, "Look, it's theirs, not yours."

U. Agents must be careful to function in a training and supportive role without taking over. They can give us directions, that is tell us how and help us do what needs to be done. We need to have the experience in doing things, particularly reports, even if everything has to be torn up and redone. It may be easier for the agent to do some things, but parents have to learn.

L. One of the things that happens is that councils get too dependent on an agent. The agent is expected to be the miracle man and take care of all, which you do sometimes have to do in the beginning. The danger lies in getting hung up in that and unable to let the people develop the skills.

Some "how to's" were suggested:

J. I found it worked best when parents, teachers, and administrators were trained together because they came at a common level, began at a common base and everybody learned together.

G. It is important to have people like we had to help show us how to function. We had directives from the region board level down through the community agent level to help us.

K. There were skills which were not taught directly by the region staff, but I think the staff set an example. By giving training and information in certain areas the people in the community seemed to function using these skills.

And finally, this quote seemed appropriate:

D. I do not think any kind of group exists, councils or any kind of citizen group without some kind of technical advice or leadership being provided. I do not mean elected leadership, I mean someone like a school-community agent or a community relations person. There is a need for someone who can provide expertise to that group in a consulting way. I am not sure all groups are willing to admit this.

In summary the findings relating to important competencies was the assertion that the level of formal education of council members was not critical to their effectiveness. Concern about education was judged more important. Other desirable personal traits were found to be tolerance, discretion, unselfishness and time to devote to council affairs. Important competencies in the seventies were 1) evaluation skills which could be applied to information programs and staff performance; 2) planning skills; 3) understanding of council philosophy and processes, including how to maintain the organization, conduct and participate in meetings; 4) communication skills; 5) internalized problem solving skills; 6) the ability to identify, prioritize and pursue issues and policies; 7) skill in obtaining and evaluating information; 8) the ability to make use of the political systems in which schools operate; 9) dkill in utilizing community resources in addition to those in the schools; and 10) understanding of the various committee areas.

There were also competencies which were important to staff, particularly principals and school-community agents.

These included understanding of group process, how to involve the community, how to cope with conflict and how to avoid building over-dependency on staff roles.

7. What Forces Impacted on the Development, Patterns of Organization, Activities, and Perceived Accomplishments of the Councils?

The secondary purpose of this research was to identify and analyze forces which influenced the development of the councils, their structure and the way they functioned. This section contains the report of findings relating to those forces in operation during the years 1971 and 1978.

Decentralization - Public Act 48

Decentralization of the Detroit Public School System was a major factor in the development of school-community councils in Region One as they currently exist. The evolution of decentralization was summarized by one of the persons interviewed:

A. We came into the seventies having accomplished several things. The community had clearly resolved the identity crisis. Blacks for the most part had developed a full awareness and understanding of who they were. We knew a great deal more about our history than ever before, and we had developed new organizational power which the school system had to recognize. had worked through the crisis of the effort to gain community control of schools, and a period of political activism which saw the extreme statement of this activism as saying there should be black control of schools.

The bottom line was that there had to be some decentralization of the authority of the big central school establishment that was running the school system. This led to the current concept of decentralization. It was believed that if we could

effectively break down this massive school structure into smaller units and provide some techniques and structures for more direct community participation in the decision-making process, we could effectively rebuild the school-community relationship and establish a new system of relevance and accountability.

Out of this Mayor Coleman Young, who was then Senator Young, and some others in the state legislature, joined in putting forth a bill which required the school board of the Detroit district to decentralize the system. Guidelines were outlined in the bill. We ended up with eight geographical smaller units and a ninth district which was an organization governing those schools carrying special education responsibilities. This system was implemented in 1971.

The guidelines governing decentralization gave the authority to region boards to "recognize the establishment of a permanent democratic structure for effective neighborhood participation in the decision-making processes of the local school."[1] This statement legitimized the involvement of community persons other than the elected board members.

M. Public Act 48 was supposed to give much broader authority to the regions in an attempt to gain even greater community participation. The reaction to that differed across the city. Region One just naturally broadened its bases.

The Region Board

There was general agreement that the Region Board was the most significant influence on the development of the councils in the seventies. The following comments substantiate this assertion:

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[1]"Guidelines for Regional and Central Boards of Education," p. 16.

K. One of the very critical forces was the philosophical beliefs of leadership in Region One. The original Region One board carved out the groundwork for a shifting of power, and the shifting away from traditional concepts and beliefs about what people could accomplish and do.

P. The region board's dedication to community involvement was the key reason why we have the unique kinds of organizations we are experiencing today. I do not believe anything happened in Region One prior to decentralization that was not happening in the other regions that would influence the way we organized our councils, except that Region One was lucky enough to get some candidates who had a different orientation and a different background. They were not the kinds of people who were looking for power as opposed to being committed to helping improve the system. What happened to shape those individuals, I do not know.

Three of the five members of Region One's first board of education were parents of Region One students and had histories of participation in their local schools. The chairperson, Mrs. Elizabeth Tindle, had been active in the parent group at Northern High School. This was the school boycotted by students in the late sixties in protest against what they felt was an inadequate educational program. Mrs. Barbara Rose Collins was active at Campbell Elementary School, and Mr. Howard T. Williams, Jr., was one of the organizers of the Knudsen Neighborhood Committee at Knudsen Junior High School. These three parents had close associations with school-community agents. In fact, Mrs. Collins, who eventually became a member of the state legislature, has on more than one occasion publicly credited the Campbell

agent with her involvement. Mr. Longworth Quinn, Jr., was a youthful former teacher, a law student and a staff member of the City of Detroit's Community Relations Commission. The lone white member was college student and substitute teacher, Donald Cook. Mr. Cook was the youngest person elected to any of the region boards in 1970.

When one considers 1) the board members were mainly black, 2) three of them lived in the model neighborhood area, 3) one lived in an urban renewal neighborhood community in which the West Central Neighborhood (WCO) was active, 4) one was a member of the Black Christian Nationalist Church (BCN), 5) at least three had been actively involved with school-community agents, it can be accurately concluded that the members of the first Region One Board of Education had felt the full impact of those forces which influenced the development of councils in the sixties.

The region board subscribed to the community control of schools philosophy, and moved quickly to take advantage of the opportunities they believed to be available through decentralization to implement as much of this philosophy as possible. The first priority was the recognition and establishment of a school-community council in each Region One school to facilitate the orderly participation of the diverse elements of the community in policy formulation and school operation. According to one of the interviewees:

L. When the Region Board mandated a council for every school, they gave councils legitimation which meant that principals had no choice. Each school had to have a council!

I'm convinced this nor any educational system in this country wanted the kind of community involvement we have had in community councils, and unless the elected body or some power group or top authority group says it must happen, it will not happen.

In mandating the councils, the region board carefully avoided imposing unwanted structures on the community. The public was encouraged to contribute and react to the planning and guidelines as they were developed. As a result, few problems and considerable support developed in the community during the organizational phase.

The following observations provide elaboration:

P. Basic reasons why the mandated Region One councils got off to such effective beginnings were the way the project was organized and the amount of support we had from the beginning. We had a region board that was in my estimation committed to community involvement and community accountability to a great degree.

This region board's dedication to community involvement was the key reason why we have the unique kinds of organizations we are experiencing today.

The region board took additional steps to guarantee council effectiveness. Some of the major steps are described in the following paragraphs:

1. Possibly recalling the feelings of powerlessness felt by parents in the sixties, the region board took steps to give the councils power:

P. The region board delegated almost all of its powers and authorities to the community. At the time, I do not think anyone was really sure about the powers of region boards, therefore those boards were more influential. Take the region's policy of having the councils evaluate their administrators. The Organization of School Administrators and Supervisors (OSAS) would never allow that to happen today. The guidelines were looked at very carefully and they did have the power to do some evaluation of administrators. Now the guidelines are never referred to. The guidelines are currently being established principally by the central board and staff. At that time, however, even central staff was not sure about the power and I think that was a key factor.

J. In the past, schools had been very authoritarian, principals had an authoritarian role and the parents' role was passive. In one sense, what the region board did was to reverse these roles.

S. We had councils before decentralization, but the region board gave the councils power, and that gave us the strength to push the councils because we knew then that what we said meant something.

2. The region board removed the veil of secrecy from the educational system which had frustrated parents. One example of how this was done involved the "Principals' Notes," administrative directives which formed the agenda for the regular meetings the region superintendent held with principals. The board decreed that council chairpersons receive copies of these notes, and that each principal review the notes with the respective chairperson. Another technique used was making copies of all documents available to the community.

In the approved functions for councils, it was stipulated that:

> The local school principal shall make available to the School Community Council all reports, records, materials, and information deemed appropriate and relevant by the Regional Board of Education and the Region Superintendent. This information must be used in pursuit of the functions and may not include materials specifically prohibited by law.
>
> In cases of conflict between the local school principal and the School-Community Council and an impasse is reached, the Regional Board shall render a decision.[1]

3. The region board supported the councils. The community was told the region board would try to follow the wishes of each council in regard to that council's school, and would confer with a council before any decision was made regarding that school. The board abided by this promise, and engaged in court cases in the effort to implement some council recommendations.

> S. Our region board gave the councils security. Councils felt if, for example, they had enough money to buy certain programs, they could make those decisions and nine times out of ten the region board went along with them.

4. The board forced principals to deal with the councils by mandating that all major administrative requests from schools such as annual budget requests and curriculum decisions carry the signature of the council chairperson. This signature was to indicate that the matter had been reviewed with the council.

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[1]See Appendix A.

5. The region board involved councils in the development of a plan which permitted council participation in the required evaluation of administrators by the region superintendent.

6. The region board insisted that council members have access to training that would enable them to function more effectively, and promoted an extensive community education program. It included an annual convention, regional committee meetings and adult education classes.

> G. The region board directive to staff to teach us how to accomplish our goals helped our councils develop. The board said that we were to decide for ourselves what we wanted to do and staff was to show us how. We gained a lot of knowledge and skill in this way.

Each board member was chairperson of a committee area and met regularly with persons who served on the same local council committees. Region staff members responsible for the related administrative areas worked closely with these committees.

7. The concept of the Region One "family" was promoted.

> J. I have noticed in this region that if there is a weak area, when it comes time to rally forces, people in other parts of the region will assist them. I have seen that happen. Citizens don't limit their support to their school areas. They extend it to all parts of the region. You get a sense of cause, of unity, of identification, of belonging. It is the extended family concept that you find so prevalent among your poor and especially your black. It is a rich concept.

P. The regional organization has been truly family oriented. People really care about each other and there is a family atmosphere. Our board meetings have had a sort of church atmosphere where everyone respected each other and was looking for knowledge and for the best ways to help students.

The warmth of the family concept was facilitated through the format used for region board meetings. Local councils were invited to "host" these meetings. In the early seventies the board always met in schools. In recent years, by community preference, the meetings have been held in the region office auditorium.

The meetings began at 6:00 p.m., with meetings of the chairpersons' organization or regional committees. Following these meetings has been a "Snack and Chat" period during which the volunteer host council has served light refreshments. This social period facilitated informal citizen contact with board and region staff members. Many problems never reached the floor at the board meetings which followed because they were resolved over a cup of coffee. Council members were always introduced at the meetings they hosted and a student member usually reported on events at the school.

Usually at Christmas and always at the convention there has been a regionwide social which has brought council staff and board members from all parts of the region into pleasant contact. Contributions have been solicited for families in which deaths and other misfortunes have

occurred. Accomplishments of staff, students and council members have been listed in an "Accolades" section of the board meeting agenda. In a number of other ways, affection and respect have been cultivated.

The Region Staff

The region staff under the direction of the region superintendent, played vital roles in developing the councils.

P. The region staff certainly had significant impact on the councils. Once the board set policy, the staff hd no choice but to implement it. Some staff may have been reluctant at first, but once they got involved, they found it really wasn't that bad and worked quite well with the councils.

K. A number of forces impacted together in propelling Region One in the direction it took. It was very significant that staff leadership, by not fighting the tide, was able to harness this force, and have it work within the system. That was not necessarily a great thing, but it worked out in a positive way because the system did yield in some regards and people were given hope because they could see progress toward their ultimate objective.

It is true the region staff was mandated to do this by the region board, but a mandate could have been circumvented had the region staff not been personally comitted to giving power to the people, power tempered by education and training.

The region superintendent(s) led the way:

P. The region superintendent was the key person involved, and was responsible to the board, so if the board said staff was to be involved and the region superintendent told the staff they must be involved, the staff was in no position to do onther than become involved.

C. Both region superintendents played an important part in the development of Region One's councils. It was closeness, having access to them when you needed them, that made a difference. You didn't have to go through so many offices and make appointments.

Under the direction of the superintendents, the region staff helped councils by being accessible and by sharing information. Staff members also worked with board members in the various committee areas. These procedures fostered community-staff understanding and relationships. This resulted in the shaping of policies compatible with teh community's goals, yet within the constraints imposed by the system.

C. The region staff worked with the councils. It was that kind of cooperation and cohesiveness in the region that made councils effective. We knew the staff. We knew each person's responsibilities. When we had questions, we did not have to go around looking because we knew where the office was and who you needed to see. The staff was dedicated and not afraid of the community. They did not fear losing control if parents were told the truth and became aware, which was healthy. The region staff would argue right down with parents if it was necessary to help them understand. I don't feel either staff or parents should be afraid to talk back when it is necessary.

The region superintendent also assigned the responsibility for organizing councils to staff with appropriate training and experience.

Much credit must be given to . . . two Community Relations Field Coordinators who were employed by the school system to coordinate the work of school-community agents. Without the expertise of such persons who were skilled in community organization strategies, the Region staff could not have handled the mammoth responsibility; the staff lacked both the time, since "regular"

school and region business was on-going and pressing, and the experience.[1]

Soon after the councils were organized one of the coordinators was added to the regi n staff to serve as the regional school-community relations administrator. All regions did not elect to add a staff person in this capacity. Nurturing the council organization was considered the primary responsibility of this job.

> K. The professional staff recognized that there needed to be a person hired to handle this responsibility, and we were fortunate in getting a staff person with the training and personal commitment who was willing to assume this tremendous task.

In 1979, the region board negotiated the employment of three members of the community to assist the school-community relations administrator by working primarily with the Title One parents in the local councils. These persons were called "Community Liaison Assistants." They monitored and assisted councils in complying with regional policies. School-community agents and assistants also related to the school-community relations administrator.

The interviewees commented:

> L. I think the school-community relations office almost ortanized the councils by itself. That office certainly had the total responsibility of developing the councils and did a fantastic job.
>
> U. The school-community relations office has been very important to region one's people

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[1]Jessie Kennedy, pp. 48-49.

because they can always go there and they get answers.

D. Another positive influence was having a school-community relations department which gave credence to that aspect of educational life.

Processes Utilized in Organizing the Councils

The processes followed in organizing the councils were important influences.

One the functions, objectives and suggested guidelines for the organization of councils had been developed and approved, the actual organizing procedures began.

Principals were responsible for assuring that all steps agreed upon were implemented. Coordinators had prepared "Notes for Principals"[1] which included directions and techniques for preparing local staffs, arranging for the public organizational meetings, publicity and other strategies to assure successful meetings. In most schools, implementation details were assigned to school-community agents and assistants who had been identified in the suggested guidelines as "consultants and working staff."[2]

Publicity

Publicity techniques had been developed which were to be followed by every school. These involved dissemination of the objectives, functions and suggested guidelines for councils as well as publicity of the initial public meeting.

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[1] A copy of this document is in Appendix S.

[2] A copy of the guidelines can be found in Appendix B.

Schools, however, were encouraged to develop additional materials and strategies for publicizing their meetings. Publicity was not limited to parents and an effort was made to reach all interested citizens who lived or worked in the school community. Special care was used to accurately interpret the Board's intent to existing advisory and other school-community groups. Each school's plan was monitored by the project coordinators.

One of the interviewees commented on the effectiveness of the publicity:

> T. I think the reason we had such a good response at our public meeting was the general thing of making it important.They got the message to the people that we had a job to do. The announcements were sent out in such a way that people came. They were not just information items. They stressed the need for everyone to be present, and the importance of the meeting and everybody went.

The strategy of widely publicizing the need for community participation has continued in Region One and has probably contributed significantly to the relatively high level of community participation enjoyed in the region.

Conveners

Board members, citizens and agency staff members were recruited to conduct the public meetings. A situation existed in which the Region Board had clearly indicated that it did not want principals to conduct meetings. This apparently related to the charge lodged against some of the existing school-community organizations of having memberships

handpicked by principals. The board felt this task would be an appropriate assignment for agents and the existing climate of school system guaranteed this plan would not win friend among admonistrators who already had reservations about councils. A suggestion by one of the region assistant superintendents that community conveners be used proved to be an excellent compromise.

The conveners were involved in training sessions with the Region Board and anyone else who cared to attend. The convener developed a procedures and a format to follow at the first public meeting which was conducted by Board Member Quinn. One of the project coordinators held a preparatory conference with each convener prior to the meeting assigned, and the coordinator was available to assist at the meeting, if needed. A policy was established that no convener would conduct a meeting in his or her community. As recently as 1978, councils were still occasionally involving conveners in council elections and in crisis situations.

The Public Meetings

The guidelines for organizing councils included procedures for the publib meetings. Although the board did not want these procedures to be considered mandates, they were accepted as policies and considered the Region Board's rules of order when community consensus was not obtainable.

The first goal of these meetings was to decide whether a new or existing organization would be the official school-

community council. Once this decision was made, a small committee was generally elected and was given the task of structuring the council. In some instances, officers were elected and given the responsibility for structuring the council.

A field coordinator's report contained the following statements:

> . . . we can report that by May 1, only four schools had not held their initial meetings, and two of these four had been scheduled for the first week in May. Also, we may report that these meetings were for the most part problem free and in the two schools where there are problems, the problems related to Region Board policy clarification.[1]

Principals

The folling comment described the importance of the rincipal's role in the development of councils:

> P. The most important person is the principal. If he is committed to community involvement, there will probably be an effective council. If he is not, it doesn't matter how active a community may want or not want to be in that school, the council will not be effective.

The project coordinators were convinced that the success of the plan to organize councils was dependent upon the understanding and support of principals. The first attempt to provide orientation for this group was finally adjourned in chaos as principals reacted with apprehension and opposition

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[1]Eleanor I. Barnwell, "Field Coordinator of School-Community Agents Monthly Report." Detroit, Michigan, April 1971 (Duplicated).

to the plans for councils. Rumors had abounded relating to the community control posture of the Region Board. There were those who believed councils were to be mechanisms for getting rid of principals. Resentment was expressed because no principals were members of the ad hoc committee which developed the objectives, functions and guidelines. The explanation that the region assistant superintendents had represented them was not acceptable. Principals had not interpreted the public invitation extended to all interested persons to attend the ad hoc committee meetings, as including them. Some principals felt threatened by the item in the suggested guidelines which read, "The principal shall be an ex-officio member without a vote." They perceived this as a loss of power and status.

The Region Superintendent adjourned the meeting until a later date to provide a cooling off period. By the second meeting, the principals were much calmer and were ready to cooperate. Several in the group were already working effectively with their respective councils. There were also principals present who had been interviewed and selected by community committees. Both groups described their experiences, emphasizing the value of councils in resolving school-community problems and supporting administrative programs. They interpreted, supported and presented the advantages of the suggested policy that principals not be voting members.

The special "Notes for Principals" prepared to assist them with the general preparations were reviewed, and role playing used to help them work through anticipated questions

and situations.

One of the interviewees recalled this in the following comments:

> J. When people are under pressure, they are bound to have to vent sometimes. Sometimes I think in leadership, you structure situations so that people can vent. Then they can come back and deal with the issues. It is true that when the first meeting was held with principals to tell them about the board mandate that there be councils, there was so much venting that the meeting had to be adjourned.

These meetings helped establish a positive working relationship between principals and project coordinators. The coordinators understood the apprehensions and insecurities of the principals, and tried to relate them to the organizational process in constructive, positive ways.

The principals were generally cooperative and participated in large numbers with their councils in the regional community education activities designed to facilitate council development.

Relationships between principals and councils were also influenced by the region board's approach to the chairpersons which included a plan to have all principals rate unsatisfactory because of low student achievement test scores. The council chairpersons, however, did not agree to support the board. Many came to the defense of their principals, and cited evidence of efforts already underway to raise achievement. This experience taught principals the expediency of building positive relationships with their councils and particularly

the necessity of keeping the community informed about the educational program. It was clear that the high regard in which the community generally held the region board did not mean councils would follow the board blindly. Councils appeared prepared to take positions they felt best for their schools based on the information at their disposal.

In an effort to dissolve remaining vestiges of resistance, the region staff deliberately structured activities to provide principals and councils positive experiences in working together. As time passed, an increasing number of principals were selected by the community, and councils developed convenient ways of working together.

Persons interviewed made the following observations:

D. One of the positive forces was the fact that there was more training of principals and administrators within the schools regarding the community involvement aspect of school life.

W. One of the most important things we have done in councils is the selection of principals. That has helped because councils could select the kind of person needed in the community, and know with whom they would be working.

Community Education

The Region One Board and staff employed a community education approach in the development of councils. This approach was facilitated by the community relations administrator who had a history of involvement in community education professional circles. This staff person provided leadership and support to the process of involving the community in identifying needs and planning programs to meet those needs.

The community education program developed in Region One provided opportunities for council members to receive training and information in the areas related to council responsibilities.

> K. The Region One community education program provided opportunities for council members to receive training and information in the areas of responsibility the councils dealt with. When you put the effectiveness of the councils in the framework of the training that was provided for council leadership, you could see radiating from council training in the region office, from the committee structure of the region board through the councils, that allowed council leadership to impact in a positive way on community relationships. I still go back to the critical importance of region staff leadership in, if not conceiving such a plan, at least implementing and developing it in an effective way.
>
> The giving of information was important. Equally as important was the example in style set by the region staff which influenced the leadership styles of board members, and in turn influenced leadership styles of council members.

Annual Convention

Beginning in 1971 when the fledgling councils were first brought together, a school-community council convention has been held annually. The conventions have been planned by committees composed largely of council members with the assistance of the school-community relations administrator. Convention themes have reflected the status and concerns of the councils:

1971 - "Making Community nvolvement a Positive Reality"

1972 - "Community Councils: What Are They Now? What Should They Be?

1973 - "Getting it Together to Keep Moving Forward"

1974 - "Community and School: Partners in Education to Promote Pupil Progress"

1975 - "Learning for Living: Dimensions of Achievement - Decisions and Decision Makers"

1976 - "Quality Education Is Our Goal: Let's Measure!"

1977 - "Parents Reawakening for Quality Education Now!"

1978 - "Decentralization, Past, Present, Future"

Each convention has provided opportunities to share information and make recommendations for the coming year. It has contributed to the maintenance of councils and to the training of their members by 1) publicly recognizing their achievements, 2) providing an opportunity for councils to recognize outstanding staff members, volunteers and student achievers, 3) providing an opportunity for staff and community residents to socialize together, 4) publicizing council achievements in the program booklet, 5) featuring a well known public figure as keynote speaker, 5) offering a variety of workshops conducted by staff and community consultants from the councils and other parts of the city, and 6) exposing councils to expert consultants who could be called upon to assist them.

Extended Board Meetings - Council Chairpersons' Organization

Once a month since 1971, the council chairpersons have met for an hour preceding the region board meeting. These

meetings were originally conducted by the region superintendent. To increase the training value of the meetings, presiding responsibilities were rotated among the council chairpersons. In 1977, the chairpersons formalized their organization. Its purposes were:

1. To provide council chairpersons with opportunities for sharing ideas, concerns, experiences and techniques.
2. To serve as the major community advisory organization from which the Region One Board of Education should seek advice.
3. To serve as a source of information for local school communities.
4. To serve as a coordinating body for the local school-community councils.
5. To serve as an in-service training resource for council chairpersons.
6. To serve as a source of leadership and coordination for regional efforts which may extend beyond regional boundaries.[1]

The council chairpersons' organization also served as the regional school-community relations committee which was part of the desegregation order issued to the Detroit School System.[2]

Extended Board Meetings -
Regional Committees

Regional committee meetings have been held prior to one region board meeting each month. The region board

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[1]"Organizational Recommendations for the Region One Council Chairpersons' Group." Region One, Detroit Public Schools. Approved January 13, 1977 (Mimeographed).

[2]The section of the order relating to this committee is contained in Appendix N.

committee chairpersons assisted by the staff administrators for their committee areas have conducted these meetings. Involved in these meetings have been persons who chair or are members of the same committees at the local council level. The committees which have met as part of the extended board meetings are Budget and Finance, Buildings and Sites, Curriculum, Personnel and School-Community Relations.

The regional committees serve as a in-service training function and councils shared problems and accomplishments. The committee members have recommended regional policies and have been credited with strengthening the council structure:

> O. Before the region board existed, councils were all independent bodies, pursuing their own activities. The region board suggested certain committees and consequently the problems were organized and could be dealt with more effectively. People who went from this council to the region board extended meetings became aware that their problems were shared by other communities, and they acquired knowledge that they were able to use here.
>
> C. We received information at the regional meetings that had not previously been available to citizens. We got complete explanations about things and we got it together. This information carried a lot of weight back at the local school.

Workshops, Seminars and Conferences

Council members have participated in a wide variety of workshops, seminars and conferences which have been concerned with every aspect of both school and council operation. These activities have been sponsored on a regional, local school and city-wide basis. Practically every workshop

held in the region has included community representatives recruited through the region. Funds have been available through specially funded projects, particularly Title One of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Model Neighborhood Agency Program (MNA) and the Emergency School Aid Act (E.S.A.A.). These funds have frequently made possible modest stipends to cover expenses incurred such as baby sitting and transportation.

Region One qualified for reimbursement of community education staff salaries and used these funds, in part to facilitate training of staff and council members in council functions. In recent years, twenty to thirty council members have participated in the school-community advisory council workshops in Flint, Michigan which have been attended by persons from all over the nation, and some foreign countries. This experience has helped build a sense of accomplishment and pride in Region One's councils. Many councils have financed their own representatives to these conferences. Others have been sponsored through the sue of the reimbursed funds.

Council members have also been encouraged and assisted to participate in a broad spectrum of city-wide conferences sponsored by the school system, legislators, the election commission and other agencies.

Written Materials to Aid
Council Development

The Region One board and staff have followed a policy of encouraging self determination. At the same time, guides

and suggested procedures have been prepared and disseminated to provide councils with workable models which they have been free to adopt, modify or discard:

> V. The patterns of behavior recommended by the board and staff were helpful. Councils usually followed fairly closely the suggestions made. That was one of the practices that made the councils work. We were not told we had to do things a certain way. We were given some suggestions and we made up our own rules, following the directions.

Appendix T contains the table of contents for a council resource notebook used by the school-community relations office. This list illustrates the range of written training materials which have been used with the councils. Council members were involved in the preparation of the majority of these aides.

Community councils have also been provided with copies of all kinds of documents including court orders, proposed legislation, special reports, proposed and approved regional and/or central board policies.

The Region Board also began publication of a regional newspaper, The Region One Voice. Occasionally, an edition is published, however, budgetary constraints severely limited the success of this endeavor.

Constellation Round Tables

Under the guidance of school-community agents and assistants, council leadership was brought together from schools which sent students to the same middle or high school. This leadership was organized into "round tables" which have met regularly to work together on mutual problems of all the

schools in the neighborhood.

C. The constellation organizations helped the weak councils, if only by keeping information flowing. Through them we were kept informed about what was taking place in the entire constellation. We were able to coordinate our efforts in matters as simple as making sure our council meetings were not held on the same days, because some of the schools involved some of the same parents. We set up a network to make sure we had representation at different school and community meetings. These things did not occur before we had these organizations.

The major goal of the constellation round tables had been to strengthen councils and make them more viable. The purposes have usually come from the following suggested list:

A. Help promote cooperative planning and problem solving.

B. Help save time and energy of citizens and staff.

C. Help strengthen all councils in a constellation.

D. Provide leadership training.

E. Provide opportunities to:

1. discuss mutual concerns and needs,
2. share ideas and information,
3. identify common problems and seek concerted solutions,
4. share responsibility,
5. promote attendance at Region One Board meetings, Regional Title One Advisory Council meetings, and other meetings, conferences, etc. affecting the welfare of children in the community,
6. Participate in constellation-wide projects (Example: clean up campaign), and
7. participate in joint constellation projects (Example: fund raiser).[1]

Following are highlights from a report of the Sherrard Constellation Round Table. It provides information about the kinds of activities round tables engage in.

SHERRARD CONSTELLATION ROUND TABLE

Our Round Table is made up of the Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen, School-Community Assistants and Agents in Schools. We began meeting in November 1974 and have met once a month thereafter. Our purpose for meeting is twofold as spelled out in our by-laws:

1. To help strengthen through leadership training the skills of the officer and committee chairmen of our councils.

2. To serve as a forum for concerns which can be acted on jointly by working together.

In our capacity as clearing house for concerns we have worked on the following problems:

Winter Region Board meetings at the Great Lakes Building, cleaning ladies at Maybee and Dwyer, art classes in our schools, stop signs at Cameron and Clay, Breitmeyer plagground equipment, NOrthern trash pick up and roach and rodent problems, North Industrial District Council, clearance of dilapidated and dangerous buildings, Block Grant funding, completion of Sherrard's playfield and how to get[2] funding for Northern's community agency . . . .

Constellation groups have also been formed around specific issues and concerns. The Sherrard Constellation Curriculum Committee is in this writer's opinion an outstanding example of accomplishment through school-community cooperation.

Adult Education Classes

During the same period in which the councils were being organized, the region board worked with the region staff to recruit volunteer teachers who would offer classes in "Black Studies," "Practical Law," "Leadership," and other subjects. Classes were held in the region office building.

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[1] Region One School Community Relations Office, "Suggestions for Organizing Constellation Community Leadership Groups (Round Tables)." February 11, 1976 (Mimeographed.)

Courses such as those previously mentioned have always been available in various Region One schools as part of the school-community agents' program. The experience at the region office legitimized these offerings and emphasized the importance of community education for effective councils. Councils have also sponsored basic education classes in their respective schools.

Title One Council

Region One has received several million dollars in Title One funds under provisions of the Elementary Secondary School Act (ESEA). When the region board became aware of the amount of required community involvement in making decisions regarding the expenditure of these funds, immediate steps were taken to help equip the community to handle this responsibility effectively. The school-community relations administrator involved a committee of council representatives in designing a training program which has involved representatives of the loval school Title One committees, chiarpersons of the school-community councils, teacher and administrative representatives. The Title One council's chairperson is now a member of the board of the National Coalition of Title One Parents.

Persons who have participated in the Title One council workshops, which are unique to Region One, have been well informed about all matters relating that aspect of the educational program.

> M. The parents have become very familiar with the grant proposals and with the rights of community organizations within Title One. They know where they can get

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[2]Region One School Community Council Convention Program Booklet. June 5-7, 1975, p. 18g (Mimeographed).

> legal counsel, in fact know when the grants are coming in before I do, and are waiting for distribution of dollars before we in the central office are even ready to distribute them.

Staff Services Provided to School-Community Councils

The Region Board recognized the importance of providing staff services to councils. In the guidelines for organizing councils, school-community agents and assistants were the staff roles identified to provide these services, and this has been the practice generally adhered to in the region.

School-Community Agents

In general, the agents were delighted with the Region Board's council thrust. Most agents already had some kind of council underway, despite administrative resistance in some of their schools. They saw the region board's plan as an opportunity to strengthen and legitimize these organizations. Agents were faced with the problem of reassuring communities that the Region Board did not intend to take over or replace existing school-community organizations. Some of these bodies had been painfully developed out of conflictual situations prior to deventralization and the community was very protective of them.

The region board's guidelines for organizing councils were based on a plan developed by agents several years earlier and updated in response to the board's interest:

> L. One of the influences the region board responded to was the field coordinators of school-community agents. The board asked the field coordinators what kind of mechanism could be used to involve the community and they were able to give the board all written out, a complete plan for organizing councils that agents had developed.

School-Community Assistants

School-community assistants, especially those who worked in schools where there were agents, supported the region board thrust. A few were reluctant, suspecting that councils could reduce the influence of the P.T.A. from whose leadership ranks many of them had been recruited. There were also problems in gaining their acceptance of a non-voting role in the councils. They argued that their community identification should take precedence over their staff roles. The assistants perceived not having the right to vote as a reduction in status. Fortunately, the Senior School Community Assistant Coordinator had been made a member of the council project staff coordinating committee and was very helpful in gaining the cooperation of this group.

The project coordinator reported:

> All twenty-three School-Community Agents assigned to Region One participated actively in the organization of their local school-community councils, rendering staff services

where needed. In schools where there were no agents, school community assistants were of immeasurable help.[1]

The agents and assistants worked diligently toward the task of operationalizing the councils. A list of appropriate duties was disseminated to help citizens understand the uses that could be made of staff assistance. This list also helped reassure the community that agents were not trying to take over and run the councils.[2]

The comments which follow were made by persons interviewed in this study:

G. The agents and assistants were really important in helping us get organized. The region could not possibly have done it all. We needed too much help. The agents and assistants were there to push us. People dropped out of things and did not follow through at times, but the agents kept at us: "Now, you have got to set up your meeting. You have got to have an agenda." They just kept directing and assisting. I do not think our councils would have worked had they not been there to help us.

C. I feel we need an agent in every school. Then you have someone you can contact at any time. In schools where there is no agent, information gets very mixed up. We also need a community assistant, someone right in the school from the community, for the community, to relate to the community.

Financial limitations have caused reductions in the ranks of school-community agents in the region. To reduce

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[1]May, Annual Report, p. 2.

[2]A copy of this list of duties is in Appendix R.

the impact of this lost in staff services, several agents were given multiple school assignments. The round tables described previously also helped fill this void.

Federal Programs and Court Orders

Federally funded projects continued to influence the development of councils in the seventies. The Model Neighborhood Agency (MNA) program, Title One of the Elementary Secondary Education Act, the Emergency School Aid Assistance (ESAA) program and Chapter III, were probably most significant.

One of the interviewees discussed the impact of MNA:

> D. An interesting development which influenced the councils was that the model cities program was winding down in terms of finances and impact about the time the councils were being organized. There were people in that program with a lot of training. The timing was good, because the Region One schools were going out inviting people to participate in the councils and this provided those people with an opportunity to exercise their leadership roles.

The federally funded projects in the schools provided leadership training for councils and were a source for new membership. School-community councils were expected to participate actively in organizing the required project committees which usually functioned as standing committees of the councils. The requirement that significant percentages of the membership of these committees be composed of non-board employees forced local schools to more actively recruit community participants. This procedure provided a "pool" of prospective council members.

R. The federal programs have been very influential. When they said there must be a Title One Advisory Council, and it had to involve people who did not work in the school, that was a very important force. That made schools recruit uninvolved people. The interest of these new people in the Title One committee could expand into interest in the councils and that helped us get a lot of our newer members.

Community Organizations

Following decentralization, a number of the organizations and leaders of the sixties either dissolved or directed their energies to other problems and parts of the city. The influence, however, of the Black Christian Nationalist (BCN) Church, increased. BCN'c National Training Center which also included cooperative apartments was located in the region, and has been actively involved at the region board level. One of the first region board members was a member of BCN. Of the fourteen persons who have served on the region board, eight have been members of BCN. BCN members have held the chairmanship of the region board since 1974, and have comprised a majority of the five member board since 1976. These persons have been particularly influential in involving councils in promoting black studies programs, in efforts to bring more black educators into positions of leadership, and in pursuing the goal of quality education of children. They have been supportive of community self determination.

Block clubs and other community organizations continued their interest in the schools. Several councils included representatives of organizations in their membership formulas.

Councils assisted the school-community relations office in compiling a list of 150 citizen organizations which were functioning the in the Region One community in the summer of 1977. Some of them, such as the Josephine Street Block Club, which has worked actively to prevent the inclusion of that street in plans for the Northern High School expansion, became very heavily involved in the council activities.

When there have been crises such as threatened school closings, block clubs generally rallied to support their neighborhood school-community councils.

When asked about the influence of community organizations in the councils, one of the interviewees responded:

> G. Community organizations have a working relationship with us. They do not run the councils.

Community Accountability

The Region One community did not place the total educational responsibility on the schools. The region board's initial position was that the community should assume more responsibility for the education of its children.

Before the region's goals were approved, council members insisted that a parental responsibility goal be included.[1] Parents met, wrote and secured approval of a goal statement from all councils. This statement has been sent home by students annually, and parents have been asked to sign their

[1]This is described in the "Report from the Task Force on Councils," in Appendix F.

names indicating their intent to cooperate.

Council members have also been concerned about how well their councils were functioning. The Task Force on Councils developed minimum standards for councils and assigned each standard a point value.[1] Records of earned "points" are kept by the school-community relations office and are publicized monthly. At the 1978 convention, the Fairbanks School-Community Council received the first "Council of the Year Award" which was a result of the "points" system.

Fringe benefits of this program included increased sharing of information about council activities and increased participation in local council and regional community affairs.

The educational problems in the region have not been solved, but the community is aware that there has been progreee, and this knowledge has contributed to the continued viability of the councils.

Summary

A school-community council was established at every Region One school as a result of a mandate by the Region One Board of Education. This board assumed office in 1971 under the provisions of Public Act #48 of the State of Michigan, which decentralized the Detroit Public School system.

[1]This is described in the "Report from the Task Force on Councils," in Appendix F.

Within two months, the Region One Board accomplished the following: 1) passed a resolution to establish councils; 2) approved objectives and functions for the councils; and 3) mandated a public meeting for each of the forty-one school communities located in the region. Following their organization, the councils were immediately involved in a number of events designed to stabilize and strengthen them. In addition, a school-community relations administrator was employed to assist in their development.

Each council determined its own organization pattern. The majority followed, however, the model contained in the region's suggested guidelines for organizing. A federal court order was later responsible for the establishment of minimum membership requirements. In 1973, the Region Board began annually certifying councils with organizational patterns and practices which complied with regional standards.

Activities of the councils touched on practically very aspect of school life. The major activities were: 1) maintaining the council organization, 2) approving and participating in making school policy and administrative decisions, 3) participating in school goal setting and program evaluation, 4) participating in regional activities, 5) evaluation of administrators, 6) increasing parental involvement, 7) advising the region board, 8) political activities, and 9) supporting programs designed to improve student achievement.

The councils accomplished the five objectives for which they were organized during the period investigated. Specifi-

cally, they 1) provided vehicles through which an increased number of citizens engaged in democratic decision-making regarding the education of children and adults; 2) built better relationships between school and community; 3) helped schools function more effectively as public service institutions of the community, particularly as this involved community development; 4) carried on a continuing evaluation of educational processes and programs, and 5) provided a direct linkage between local school communities and the region board.

Using the councils as catalysts, a community network with community opinion leaders was established and political mobilization of the community accomplished. The councils helped unite the community and contributed to the personal growth of community members.

The councils enjoyed varying degrees of effectiveness with problems related to budget and finance, buildings and sites, curriculum, personnel, school-community relations and political action. They were most effective in curriculum and school-community relations, the areas over which the region board of education had most control. They coped less effectively with problems involving finance which were more directly under the control of the central board of education. Contracts between the central board and labor unions were responsible for the lack of success experienced by councils in effecting desired personnel changes.

Cpmpetencies important to the role of being a council member were found to be evaluating, planning, communicating,

problem solving, and utilization of resources. Council members needed to understand the council philosophy, organizational processes, the council committee areas and the political systems in which the schools were operated.

Competencies were also identified which were important to principals and school-community agents in their roles with councils. These included: 1) understanding of group processes; 2) skill in involving the community; 3) coping with conflict; and 4) the ability to avoid building over-dependency on staff roles.

Forces which impacted on the development, patterns of organization, activities and perceived accomplishments of the councils from 1971 to 1978 were 1) decentralization of the school system, 2) the region board, 3) the region staff, 4) the processes utilized in organizing the councils, 5) the principals, 6) the community education philosophy, 7) staff services to councils provided by school-community agents and school-community assistants, 8) federally funded programs, 9) community organizations, and 10) the community's desire to be accountable.

This chapter contained a description of the development of local school-community councils in Region One, during the period, 1971 to 1978.

APPENDIX A

COMPETENCIES FOR COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

CATEGORY	COMPETENCIES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
TRAINING	7. Conducting and participating in council meetings	a. The council member will participate in a council meeting during which he/she demonstrates his/her ability: to listen to others--assimilating their information; to express opinions; and to adhere to parliamentary procedures.
	31. Identifying and using community leadership	a. The council member will identify one opinion leader in the community. b. He/she will contact the opinion leader and obtain names of other opinion leaders from the contacted leader. c. Given a school-community problem and a list of techniques to involve opinion leaders, the council member will select the most practical technique for his/her community person.
	33. Assessing council organizational patterns and functions of Region One and other regions to identify areas needing revision	a. Given a discussion of council structures, the council member will identify four ways of structuring councils.

COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

CATEGORY	COMPETENCIES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
TRAINING	1. Understands the region's council philosophy, structure and processes (e.g., What is community council? Purpose, responsibilities and powers of councils? Appeal procedures, etc.)	a. Given a list of 30 objectives, the council member will select the 11 objectives that are functions of the council.
	2. Developing and using criteria for selecting council chairpersons	a. The council member will identify and describe desirable qualities of an effective chairperson and he/she will use these qualities to select a chairperson.
	3. Functioning as a chairperson	a. The council member will be able to function as a chairperson of a group in a simulated council meeting. b. The council member will be able to conduct a simulated orderly council meeting during which he/she uses parliamentary procedures, delegates responsibility, and involves a majority of members in council discussions.
	5. Assessing his own commitment, knowledge and skills as a community council member (i.e., self-appraisal)	a. Given a self-assessment instrument measuring strengths and weaknesses, the council member will be able to interpret the scores. b. Given a list of activities, he/she will select those that improve his competency as a council member and apply those activities in the council workshop.

COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

CATEGORY	COMPETENCIES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
EVALUATING	18. Evaluating and selecting instructional materials	a. Given a list of ten criteria to evaluate instructional materials, the council member will be able to evaluate an instructional product using at least five of the above criteria.
TRAINING	10. Understanding the grade structure and organization of a school	a. The council member will be able to reproduce the grade organization of elementary, middle and high school. b. Given a list of job responsibilities and a list of school staff, the council member will be able to match the staff member with the appropriate job responsibility.
	4. Assisting council members in working together and helping them understand that in unity there is strength	a. The council member will be able to recall and describe two team building activities that help the group to work together towards goal attainment. b. He/she will apply activities such as adhering to council decisions, developing good relationships with the group, making community members feel important in a simulated council meeting.
	9. Explaining the structure of the region (job responsibilities, lines of authority, power structure, lines of communication)	a. Given a list of job descriptions and a list of job responsibilities in the region, the council member will be able to match the job with the appropriate responsibility. b. Given a list of authority levels, the council member will be able to rank the authority levels in hierarchial order.

COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

CATEGORY	COMPETENCIES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
EVALUATING	11. Analyzing critically the school's philosophy, operations, and sources of funding	a. The council member will generate ten qualities of a good school and estimate the presence of these qualities in an existing school.
	8. Using decision-making and problem-solving techniques for improving council effectiveness	a. The council member will be able to list in sequence the seven steps of a problem-solving technique. b. He/she will be able to generate three problem situations and apply the seven-step problem-solving technique to two of these.
	14. Identifying school policies which should be changed to allow greater parent participation in school decision making.	a. Given a list of written policies regarding parent participation, the council member will be able to compare the written policy statement to existing practice within the school and region.
	16. Evaluating the effectiveness of council interaction with local school and region staff	a. With the assistance of school staff, the council member will be able to generate ten criteria to evaluate the interactions of the council, local school, and region staff.
	32. Securing community understanding and involvement in determining and prioritizing student needs	a. In a school-community project, the council member having received data on student needs will utilize newsletters, telephone chains, workshops to inform the community about the student needs. b. Given newsletter, telephone chain, and workshop data on student needs, the council member will compile the data on community reaction to student needs.

COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

CATEGORY	COMPETENCIES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
PROBLEM SOLVING	15. Developing procedures and strategies for increasing community interest and participation in council activities	a. Given a list of activities that increase community participation, the council member will be able to design an activity process stating the purpose, procedures and resources to be utilized in the activity.
	21. Identifying problems, selecting the best possible solutions and evaluating the results	a. Given a simulated problem situation, the council member will be able to identify the problem, to generate at least three solutions and two criteria for evaluating the suggested solutions.
	22. Identifying and concentrating on issues and policies rather than personalities	a. Given a group discussion on a controversial issue, the council member will upon observation of group discussion differentiate between council members discussing issues/policies and council members discussing personalities.
	26. Electing representatives to planning group and then going through the planning process	a. Given a discussion of five election procedures and a simulated council election, the council member will apply one of the election procedures in the council election. b. Given a discussion of five-step planning procedure, the council member will be able to apply the procedure in a simulated situation to achieve a council plan.
	34. Obtaining and assessing information for accuracy and completeness	a. Given a survey instrument, the council member will conduct a survey, distribute a questionnaire, tabulate the data, and draw three conclusions from the data.

COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

CATEGORY	COMPETENCIES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
COMMUNICATING	25. Understanding and using rumor control techniques	a. Given a rumor, the group will use a brainstorming technique to generate ten methods of gathering information pertaining to the rumor. b. Given ten methods of gathering information on a rumor, the group will prioritize the ten methods using feasibility as a ranking criteria.
	6. Making oral reports of council and committee actions	a. Given an attended council meeting, the council member will be able to describe council actions in a five-minute report which he/she delivers publicly at a simulated council meeting.
PROBLEM SOLVING	35. Conducting fund raising activities	a. Given a list of regional and school policies and a simulated fund-raising project, the council member will be able to discern whether activities in the project are not in violation of regional and school policies.
	20. Developing a plan of action to evaluate school programs	a. Given a list of 15 criteria to evaluate a school program, the council member will use ten criteria to rate the effectiveness of the school program.
	27. Developing a plan of action to evaluate the performance of principals and teachers	a. Given a list of ten criteria to evaluate the performance of principals and paraprofessionals and a simulated situation, the council member will be able to evaluate the performance of principals and paraprofessionals in that situation using at least five of the listed criteria.

COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

CATEGORY	COMPETENCIES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
COMMUNICATING	12. Assisting the council in improving its relationship with the region staff, region board and central board of education	a. The council member will describe three persuasion techniques that encourage members to attend council meetings, region board meetings, central board meetings, so that members in addition to their own group meeting will attend the meetings of the other two groups.
	24. Communicating with state department personnel (legislators, state board) regarding the local school program (e.g., decentralization)	a. Given a problem and four communication procedures (telephone, letter, petition, face-to-face contact), the council member will select a feasible communication procedure to contact state department personnel. b. Given a problem and five examples of letter forms, the council member will select a letter form and modify it to reflect concerns relating to the problem. c. Given a problem and a format of a telephone conversation, the council member will be able to adapt the format and list three major concerns in a simulated telephone conversation. d. (1) Given a problem, the council member will be able to design a petition which: (a) states the problem (b) provides space for signatures and addresses of addressees. (2) He/she will request five council members to complete the petition. e. Given a problem, the council member will participate in a triad procedure to communicate the problem and to verify the accuracy of the communication.

TABLE III

COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

CATEGORY	COMPETENCIES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
ADVISING	17. Serving as an advisor to administrators regarding curriculum needs and changes	a. The council member will be able to function in an advising role to administrators advising on curriculum needs and changes. b. He/she will list and describe community priorities.
	28. Participating in the selection of administrators and school service assistants consistent with contractual agreements.	a. Given five selection criteria and having generated five additional selection criteria, the council member will use the ten criteria to evaluate one employment file. b. Given five interview questions and having generated five additional interview questions, the council member will rank the ten questions for the selection of the candidate.
	23. Solving specific problems such as student safety and fighting	a. Using a brainstorming technique to generate problems, the council member will identify one crucial student problem. b. Given a crucial student problem, the council member will be able to apply a seven-step problem-solving technique.

COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

CATEGORY	COMPETENCIES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
COMMUNICATING	29. Communicating effectively the need for funding of council related projects	a. Given information on funding sources, the council member will apply to two sources for funding.
	30. Interpreting information about federal and state funded projects	a. Given the guidelines for Title I and for Article III and given synonymous statements to parts of the guidelines, the council member will match the part of the guidelines with the synonymous statement.
	19. Supporting school programs	a. Given attendance of school system workshops, a discussion on community experiences, and a list of six programs, the council member will be able to select two programs related to his/her community experiences and to information acquired at the attended workshops. b. Given two selected programs, the council member will generate three alternative ways to support each program.
	13. Helping parents and community people communicate and work with the school staff	a. The council member will be able to list and describe five activities which encourage parents' and community members' attendance at council meetings.